

THE Saturday Journal

A POPULAR PAPER

WEEKLY

PLEASURE & PROFIT

Vol. I. No. 33.

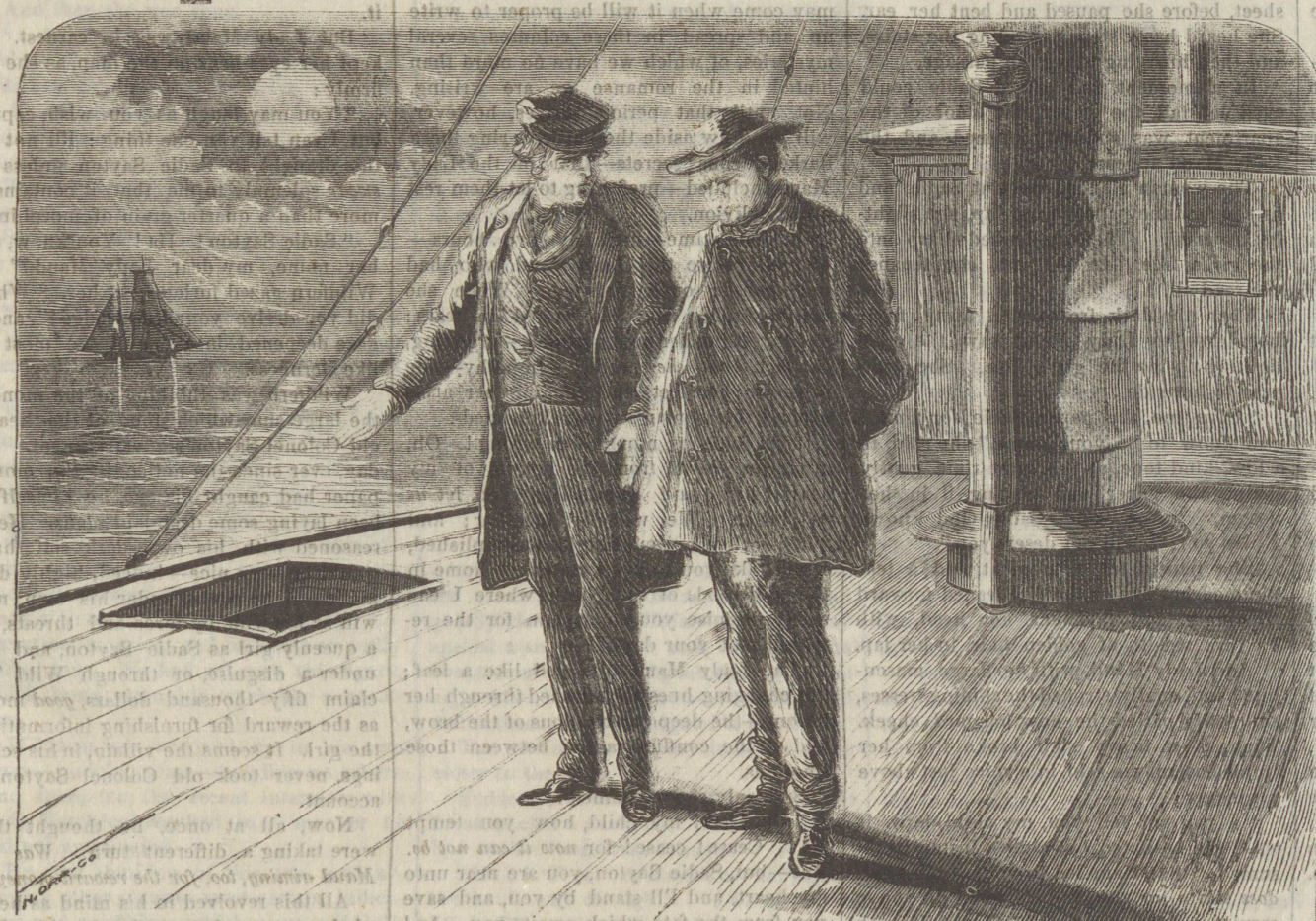
BRADLEY AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
98 William Street.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 29, 1870.

TERMS: \$2.50 per Annum, in advance.
\$1.35 for Six Months.

Price 5 Cents.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by BRADLEY AND COMPANY, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.



THE HEART OF FIRE; OR, MOTHER VERSUS DAUGHTER. A REVELATION OF CHICAGO LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

Author of "The Ace of Spades," "The Scarlet Hand," "The Witches of New York," Etc.

CHAPTER XI.

A QUESTION AND AN ANSWER.

This staunch proponent, "State of Michigan," was plowing her way through the moonlit waters of the lake, her prow headed toward Chicago.

It was a beautiful night, clear and cool. The hands of the clock in the pilot-house had long since passed the figures that denoted eleven, and midnight was near at hand.

Two men were pacing up and down the deck where the moonbeams played in rays of silver light.

One was an old man, his hair and beard were white as snow. Keen were the blue eyes that sparkled above his ruddy cheeks. And though the snows of seventy winters had whitened his locks, yet his step was as light and his form as stalwart as though he were in the bright heyday of manhood.

He was a man approaching the confines of the grave with rapid steps. This was Lemuel Middough, captain of the "State of Michigan," and one of the leading ship-owners of Chicago.

Lemuel Middough was a man well to do in the world. His note on "Change would be readily cashed for almost any amount.

Middough had come to Chicago when—now justly proud—"Metropolis of the West" was but a swamp through which stole two muddy creeks.

He had seen the city grow up from the wilderness into the great center point of the West.

He had early embarked in the carrying trade on the lakes, and from the owner of a little ugly sloop of fifty tons he had risen to be the proprietor of one of the largest propeller-lines on the lakes.

From the force of habit, Captain Middough still commanded. He declared that he could not sleep well on shore more than a week at a time, unless it was in the winter, when, perforce he must remain on shore, the lakes being frozen.

Middough was an impulsive, generous-hearted man. Frank and open in his bearing, and showing in his manner some traces of the early sailor-life that he had led.

He was a self-made man in every sense of the word. Commencing without a dollar, he had made thousands by honest toil.

The other, who with Middough paced the deck of the "State of Michigan," was named Amos Kenwood. He was the second officer of the propeller. In person he was short and thick-set, with a manly, expressive face. In years about thirty-five or forty.

Kenwood had joined the "Michigan" early in the spring, and therefore at the time that he wrote of, he had been on the vessel some four months.

By nature, Kenwood was silent and reserved. He spoke but little, and did not invite conversation. Those who came in daily contact with him noticed that a cloud seemed ever on his brow. Naturally they guessed that some heavy sorrow had, at

some previous time, fallen upon him, and that the remembrance of it had blighted all his life.

Middough himself had taken quite an interest in the silent man, who performed his duties so thoroughly and willingly; but even he had not attempted to unravel the mystery of the gloom that overshadowed the life of the first officer of the "Michigan."

Another strange fact too had been noted by those whose business brought them in contact with Kenwood, and that was, that his neck was encircled by a scarlet ring imprinted on the flesh—a livid mark, as if a hand of fire had grasped the throat and left its blazon there.

Kenwood generally wore a scarf around his neck as if he wished to conceal the strange blemish on his throat.

This scarlet ring, taken in connection with his silence, and the gloom ever upon his brow, gave all that knew him the idea that in his past life were chapters of fearful meaning.

As the two paced slowly along the deck of the propeller, Middough, every now and then cast his eyes forward, looking eagerly to the right of the vessel.

"No signs of the Chicago light yet, Mr. Kenwood," he said, after an earnest gaze southward.

"No, sir," replied the other; "but we can not be far from it."

"We should see it before midnight," said Kenwood.

"I shall be glad to reach Chicago. I have certain reasons for wishing to be in that city as soon as possible." And as the captain spoke, a glad smile came over his bluff features.

Kenwood did not reply, but paced onward by his side in silence.

"Kenwood, were you ever in love?" questioned the captain, suddenly.

The officer started at the question, and a look of pain passed over his features, but Middough, who was watching the surface of the lake beyond, did not notice.

"Yes, sir, I have been in love in days gone by," replied Kenwood, in a voice that trembled slightly as he spoke.

"Kenwood, I'm going to ask you advice on a rather delicate subject," said Middough, after a short pause.

"Very well, sir; I will try and give it to the best of my ability."

"What do you think of an old man marrying a young girl? Of course I don't mean a feeble old man, but one like myself for instance, bluff, hardy and full of life," said the captain, slowly.

"I hardly know how to reply," said the other, after a pause. "If I knew the parties perhaps it would be different."

"Take the general idea of the subject," said Kenwood, "and I do not think that is a wise proceeding on the part of the husband."

Middough cleared his throat a bit. The answer was very unsatisfactory. "You do not think, then, that such marriages are advisable?"

"No, I do not," answered Kenwood, honestly.

"Well, why so?"

"Because I can hardly believe it possible that they would be suited to each other; and, of course, unless husband and wife are suited, the marriage can not be a happy one."

"Yes, that's very true," said Middough, slowly; "but if the parties were suited to each other—"

"Why, then, of course they would live happily together; but, as a general thing, I think that such marriages would not be productive of happiness."

"Well now, take a case like this," said the captain, earnest in tone. "Suppose that an old man, or one that the world calls old, although he himself feels that he has twenty years of life in his veins yet—suppose that such a man, wealthy and holding a good position among his fellow-men, should happen to meet with a beautiful girl—she poor and belonging to the poorer class; supposing that, attracted by her beauty and gentleness, he took an interest in her, and that she, despite the difference in their years, returned that interest; suppose the man, finding that he really did like the girl, proposed to her to marry her, with the understanding that the difference in their social positions, and she gratefully accepted that offer, don't you think that she would make a good wife and that the marriage would be a happy one?" And the captain looked earnestly in the face of his companion when he had finished.

"Are you sure that the girl is not dazzled by the position and wealth of her suitor? that she loves the comfort, luxury, that she will receive by the union rather than the man who gives them to her?" said Kenwood, earnestly.

For a moment Middough looked puzzled at the question.

"Well, I don't know. I suppose that it is hard to say," he replied, finally. "But, even in that case," he continued, warming up with the subject—"even allowing that the girl is influenced more by the thoughts of what the union will give her than by her love for the man, then gratitude for the benefits he has conferred upon her should make her love him after marriage, if she did not before."

And the captain paused with a look on his face that plainly said that he considered his argument unanswerable.

"Gratitude, captain, is a strange quality," said Kenwood, quietly. "Gratitude sometimes turns into hate apparently without reason, except that the weight of obligation is too heavy to be borne with ease. Many a man and woman in this world has—like the snake—turned upon and stung the hand that has befriended them. Gratitude is an uncertain ally to count upon in this world's battles. There are some in this life so worthless at heart that, the more you do for them, the more they think you ought to do—who really hate you because they are indebted to you."

"That's very true," said Middough, thoughtfully.

"I do not say that it is the fact in this case, for I suppose your supposition concerns a living man and woman."

Middough silently nodded assent. "Still, it is as well to consider all these things. I do not say it is impossible that a young girl should truly love a man much her senior in years, but I do say that it is unlikely."

For a few moments the two paced the deck in silence.

"I'll stake my life that she loves me," exclaimed Middough, suddenly.

Kenwood was not astonished at the exclamation, for he had guessed that the captain was one of the supposed parties.

"Then you are the man, captain?"

"And the woman?"

"A blue-eyed girl of eighteen that I met just by chance in one of the worst streets in all Chicago."

"And you love her?"

"Yes; she has bewitched me."

"Bewitched you!" Kenwood smiled at the expression.

"Yes, I'll tell you all about it."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MARK ON THE NECK.

For a moment or so the two walked on in silence, then the captain spoke:

"I had occasion one day just about a month ago to enter into a little saloon on Wells street, called the Kankakee House, and there I beheld the prettiest woman that I have ever laid eyes on. She was a little sprightly girl, about eighteen years old, with short, golden curls, bright blue eyes and the face of an angel—a perfect little witch. I confess that I was fascinated at the first glance, long as I have lived in the world. Of course I found an excuse to go to the saloon again and again. I got acquainted with the girl, and I found that her disposition was as angelic as her face. She is the daughter of the man that keeps the saloon. His name is Casper. The girl is called Lurrie."

"A strange name."

"Yes, but it suits her well. Lurrie—to lure; that is, using the word in its best sense—to attract."

"Yes, but it is generally used attached to evil, to lure, to attract to danger," said Kenwood, dryly.

"Well, there is danger in her—danger to any man's heart that looks upon her," said the captain, gayly. "But, to be brief, I took a strange interest in the girl, and she seemed gratified at my notice. She apparently put herself out to please me. I noticed this, mind you, without letting her see that I was watching her. There was such a charm about her, so much gentleness and innocence, that, even if I had not wished to love her I should have been compelled to do so despite myself. On my last visit there I asked her how she would like to become an old man's darling? If she thought that she could be happy as my wife? Ah, Kenwood, it would have done your heart good to have seen that girl's features when the offer fell upon her ears. For a moment she looked me full in the face with those soft blue eyes of hers opened to their widest extent, as if she was unable to comprehend my meaning. Then, when it was plain to her the moment afterward, the tears stole into her eyes, and she hid her face on my breast, and said that she did love me. Kenwood, I felt ten years of my age that can win the love of a pure young girl's heart."

"And you are going to marry her then?" asked Kenwood, who had a dim suspicion that perhaps the old captain was not quite as sharp-sighted as he imagined himself to be.

"Well, it is not exactly settled yet," replied the captain, with some slight hesitation. "She confessed freely that she loved me, but asked me to wait until my return from this trip before she gave a decided answer. I read there's no doubt about it whatever. I read in the girl's eyes that she loved me and meant to consent. It was only maiden coyness that impelled her to ask for the delay. I am sure that when I visit her to-morrow, she will do so at once. I shall be the happiest old fellow in Chicago." And the captain rubbed his hands together gleefully, as he spoke.

Kenwood watched him with a peculiar look in his eyes. It was evident that he was no believer in the power of love.

"Well, captain, I wish you joy," he said, cheerfully. "I have opened my heart to you to-night, because I knew you to be a sensible man and that you could give me good counsel."

Kenwood could not forbear smiling at the idea of counseling a man who had so fully made up his mind as to what he should do.

"Of course I haven't said a word about this affair to any of my relations," said Middough. "A precious row they'd kick up if they had any idea that I was going to put my neck into the matrimonial halter at my time of life, as they would say. Just as if a man was ever too old to do a wise thing!"

"You are the best judge, probably," said Kenwood, quietly. He thought that advice would be thrown away upon a man so determined upon his course of action as Middough.

"Well, I should say so!" cried Middough, heartily. "but you see my relatives would never admit it. They would call me an old fool for even dreaming that a young girl could love me."

"Yes, that is probable."

"Now, there's my nephew, Wirt—he's a

sensible young dog, for such a devil-may-care fellow as he is. I sounded Wirt carefully upon the subject before I went away on this trip, and he fully agreed with me, that it was possible for a young girl to love an old man, and that I had a perfect right to do as I pleased in all things regarding myself. Of course I didn't let the young rascal see what I was driving at."

"Then you intend to be married soon?"

"Yes; just as soon as I get Lurrie to consent. I haven't got so much time in the world that I can afford to waste any of it," replied the captain.

"That is true."

"By the way, Kenwood," said Middough, suddenly, "there is something about you that puzzles me."

"Indeed! what is it?"

"The abstraction that you seem to be perpetually in—the cloud on your face. It doesn't suit with you at all. You must have suffered terribly at some time in your past life to have the effects still so visible upon you."

"You are right; I have suffered terribly," replied Kenwood, in a tone that told plainly that even the thought of that suffering was bitter.

"I hope I am not intruding upon your confidence," said Middough, kindly.

"Oh, no; not at all. It is but natural that you should wonder at my gloomy abstraction. I'll tell you the cause of it. You have made me your confidant; I'll return the compliment; perhaps it will make me feel better to speak of the past."

"Has that peculiar scarlet mark around your neck any thing to do with your story?"

"Yes; that is a symbol to keep alive the memory of the wrong that has been done me, and keep me from forgetting that, some day, I may have bloody vengeance for that wrong," replied Kenwood, in a voice that showed how the memory of the past rankled in his breast.

"To begin at the beginning; I am a native of an Eastern State, by profession a sailor, and have followed the sea from early boyhood. At the commencement of our late war I enlisted on the Northern side. My regiment was ordered to the West. I served my term out, then re-enlisted. I rose gradually, so that, when my regiment was ordered to join Steele in his Arkansas expedition, which resulted in the capture of Little Rock, I held a commission as first lieutenant."

"After the capture of the Rock, my regiment was sent to Pine Bluff. We were in garrison there for some time. Then we went on the Camden expedition, and then, when we returned, went again to the Bluff."

"One day, on a scouting expedition, I halted for water at a little house, some twenty miles from the Bluff, on the river road. There I became acquainted with a young and pretty girl. I took quite a fancy to her, and she to me. With the exception of an aged father, she was alone in the house. Her two brothers were in the ranks of the First Arkansas Regiment, fighting for the Union. Like her brothers, the girl was loyal to the old flag."

"Of course, I managed in my scouting expeditions to pay quite a number of visits to this young lady."

"One day, on dismounting at the house, I found her in tears. After much solicitation, she told me what the matter was. A noted guerrilla leader, fighting on the Confederate side, had, like me, stopped at the house, and, like me again, had fallen in love with the girl. She, however, had refused his suit. This man had heard of my visits to the lady, and had openly threatened to her that he would lay in wait for me some fine day and provide me with a hempen collar. I laughed at the threat, of course. I had little fear, but the girl was terrified at the thought of my being exposed to danger, and implored me to be careful, which I promised, readily. I had counted without my host, though; for, one day, when at the farm-house with my men, the guerrillas came down upon us like an avalanche. Half my squad were killed outright; the rest fled, and I was taken prisoner. As the guerrilla promised, I was provided with a hempen collar, and swung up to a tall cottonwood tree, right before the eyes of the girl. She fainted with fright, and was carried off by this demon. She was never heard of after. The rest of my regiment arrived just in time to cut me down and save my life, but I lay on my back for many an hour, just between life and death. The mark of the rope is still on my neck, you see. I shall wear it to my dying day."

"A terrible story."

"Yes; do you wonder that I am abstracted and silent when I have this horrible memory ever with me? Sleeping or waking, I pray but for one thing."

"And that is?"

"That I may one day meet this fiend who committed the horrible outrage, and have a chance to put my mark on him as he has his on me." Intense with feeling was the tone that he spoke in.

"It is possible that you may meet him."

"Yes; and when that hour comes, either he or I will stand before the Great Judge a few minutes after."

"Hullo! there's the Chicago light!" And so the conversation ended.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TREAD OF THE CAT.

LURRIE met Rick on the stairs.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To get some beer for the gentleman," he answered.

"Did you put him in the room where I told you?"

"Yes, ma'am," he replied.
"Did he say that he was going to bed at once?"

"He didn't say nothing at all 'bout it," Rick answered. "He only wanted to know if I could get him some beer, that's all."

"Very well, get it, then," and Lurrie, reaching the landing, went into her room and closed the door.

"I wonder what she is so mighty curious 'bout this feller for?" and Rick ran his hands through his shock of red hair reflectively. "I never see'd her so before. 'Pears to me that something's up. I must find out what it is." And with this reflection, Rick descended to the bar, got his pitcher of ale, and again ascended to the room of the stranger.

Lurrie, after entering her room, paced the floor for a few moments, evidently in great agitation.

"Now let me think!" she cried, sinking with an air of weariness into a chair. "That he has recognized me, I am sure. I detected it in the glitter of those cruel black eyes. How I loved those eyes once, and that man! How I hate him now! I am sure that he will try to harm me. I know that he hates me fully as much as I hate him. He is poor, too; that is evident by his shabby dress. His old ill luck still clings to him, then. What evil genius sent him here just at this moment? Just as I had fancied that, hereafter, this world's life would be easy for me, and that, though the past was all gloom and shame, the future might be bright with peace and happiness?"

Then she rose from her seat, and for a few moments paced the floor with the stealthy and nervous tread of the caged tiger.

"Heaven knows I do not want to kill him but I must; it is forced upon me! I have but one choice—one road to follow, and that leads to death. If he learns that I have fascinated this old captain, he will denounce me to him. Then my vision of happiness, of wealth, will be destroyed, and by his hand, too. Has he not wronged me enough already? Why should he live to make my life one of torture? He is in my power. Fate has given him into my hands. Besides I will not shed his blood, although I take his life. A single twist of the fingers and the deed is done. No tell-tale blood; no marks of violence will betray the manner of his death. All will think that it is the result of accident. Oh! I do not want to do it!" and for a moment she wrung her hands in agony. "But, it must be. His hateful presence shall not keep me from treading the path to wealth that a kind fortune has placed before my feet. I will be this man's wife if I had to destroy not one Bertrand Tasnor, but ten! Oh! how well I remember his name, and how I used to watch for his step, and count the hours that intervened between our stolen meetings! But now, in the place of love, is hate—bitter, unrelenting hate! Oh! let me rest awhile. My brain seems to be on fire." With a convulsive sob Lurrie, the strange compound of a woman and a tiger, threw herself upon the bed, and buried her face in the pillow.

For half an hour or so she remained there, sobbing convulsively but lowly. Strange words came in between the convulsive sobs. She murmured of a babe, and blamed herself for that babe's death.

Many a dark secret was in that little head that the bright, crispy curls crowned with rays of glittering gold!

After a time the sobs grew fainter and less frequent.

She rose from the bed and bathed her temples.

"He must have gone to bed by this time," she murmured. Then she went to the door and listened. All was still in the house.

"I can easily find the little door," she said, "and then, that once opened, death will come to him, not suddenly but surely, a death that he can not fight against, for it will steal upon his senses and numb them to forgetfulness."

Then again she opened the door and listened. As before, all was still.

"I am sure that I can find the door, even in the dark," she said. "If I take a light when I open the door the rays may penetrate into the room and might alarm him should he chance to awake; but, that is unlikely. Why should he lay awake? He can not expect danger. I did not let him see that I recognized him."

Then to her ears came the sound of footsteps descending the stairs, and in a few moments Rick appeared bearing in his hand the light that he had taken from the room occupied by the stranger.

"What have you got there, Rick?" said Lurrie, appearing at her door suddenly, as the boy passed. Rick started as if he had been shot, and the lamp almost dropped from his hand.

"Why, Miss Lurrie," he said, after drawing a long breath, "how you frightened me."

"Where did you get that lamp from?" she demanded.

"From the room where the gentleman is," replied the hunchback.

"Ah! he has gone to bed, then?" exclaimed Lurrie, hoping that it was so.

"Yes, miss," said Rick, who did not dare tell her that he had told the stranger about the gas. He saw that she was anxious about the unknown, and had taken his appearance with the lamp as a sign that the stranger had retired to rest.

"You need not sit up any longer, Rick; you can go to bed."

"Yes, miss," said the boy, slowly proceeding down-stairs to his bed, which was only a heap of rags in a little dark recess formed by the stairway. "Wouldn't she cut up rough, if she knewed that I'd told that feller up-stairs all 'bout the room! She's up to something, to-night; I kin tell that by her eyes. They look just like the eyes of a cat. I reckon she won't make much out of that gent up-stairs, though. He's just as cool as an iceberg. Why, a perarie wind in winter's a fool to him! If I go with him it will be just high times for me!" And, with this pleasant reflection, Rick crawled into his little den, put out the light, gathered the rags around him and was soon in that paradise—which is free alike to all in this world, be they prince or peasant—the land of dreams.

Lurrie watched Rick until the glimmer of his light was lost in the turn of the stairway.

"Shall I go now or wait for a few minutes?" she asked herself. For a moment she pondered. "I had better wait," she said, at length. "He must be asleep, or my plan will fail; yet, even if it does, he will not be apt to suspect that it is a blow aimed at his life."

Lurrie returned to her room, and for a quarter of an hour or more remained quietly seated, buried in gloomy thoughts.

Suddenly she rose to her feet. "It is time," she murmured; "he must be asleep by this."

Quietly and carefully she stole up-stairs. Hardly a board creaked under her light tread.

She reached the landing whereon was situated the room that had been assigned to the stranger.

Cautiously she opened the door of the room next to that one, and entered.

To return to Bertrand: After the departure of the hunchback, he turned the gas-light down so that it burned with a faint blue flame and threw no light whatever out into the room. Then, with the revolver by his side, he extended himself upon the bed, ready for the approach of the foe that he felt sure would attack him at some time during the night.

The gas was within easy reach. In a second he could turn it up to its full light.

Bertrand waited patiently.

Time passed, and yet no sign of the anticipated foe.

Then, suddenly, a slight noise fell upon the listener's ear.

With every sense aroused to acuteness, he waited.

The noise came from the direction of the little secret door in the wall. It was plain that some one was opening it.

"I wonder if it is she?" he muttered, as he raised the revolver—he had previously cocked it—and trained it in the direction of the little door. "Is it fated that she shall perish by my hand?"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 30.)

\$50,000 Reward:

OR,
THE ROMANCE OF A RUBY RING.

A PHILADELPHIA HISTORY AND MYSTERY.

BY WM. MASON TURNER, M. D.

AUTHOR OF "MASKED MINER," "UNDER HAT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A QUESTION OF TRUST AND—MONEY.

SADIE glanced around her, and then suddenly sat up in bed. She had heard the rustle of the paper; she was now looking for it.

She started as her eyes fell upon it.

Leaping lightly to the floor, she stooped, picked up the newspaper, and drew a chair directly under the light. Greedily spreading open the paper she began to read.

It must be remembered that the room opened not at all on the outside world directly, save through the chimney. Of course not much light could come through that medium. The gas, which was kept constantly burning, therefore, alone lit the apartment.

Sadie glanced hurriedly over the columns of the paper before her; she longed to learn something of the great, bustling world outside, from which she was so closely, so rigidly excluded. To the poor girl it seemed that instead of a day or two, she had been shut up a whole month. The time had dragged heavily with her, and for the most part she had lain in a sort of half-stupor, perhaps torpor, were a better word.

No wonder, then, that she clutched the paper so tight, and devoured its contents with ravenous eyes.

Up and down the closely-printed columns she glanced. Every thing was read with avidity.

Suddenly, as she accidentally gazed over one of the advertising pages, she paused. Her eye burned down into the sheet before her—her bosom heaved, and she gasped for breath.

She had found and read her father's advertisement concerning herself!

The poor girl's brain reeled, and dropping the paper to the floor, she clapped her hands to her burning head. And then, as a copious flow of tears came to her relief, the maiden knelt down and prayed to God to give her strength.

At length she looked up. Her face was calm, and there was quiet in her bosom.

She reached down and again picked up the paper. Once more she glanced over the advertisements.

Suddenly she started again as she saw the name "Frank Hayworth" signed to a notice.

Frank Hayworth was the *Hawkshaw* of that fatal night to her at the theater, and he was one very dear to her.

And then Sadie glanced sadly, musingly, at the finger on which she had worn Allan Hill's last gift—the ruby ring, which she thought now forever lost. Tears came to her eyes, and falling over her pallid cheeks, dropped upon the rich carpet of the floor.

But again Sadie conquered her emotions, and turned to the paper to read Frank Hayworth's advertisement. Scarcely, however, had she spread out the crumpled sheet, before she paused and bent her ear. She heard hasty steps ascending the stairs, and then hurrying along the passage.

In a moment, and before Sadie could even let fall the paper, the door of the apartment was suddenly opened and the Lady Maud appeared.

The woman glanced once at Sadie, and as she saw the paper in her lap, she slightly frowned. Then she looked sharp into the girl's face. In that sad countenance she read all.

Then the dark frown fled away from her brow as Lady Maud saw the glad lighting-up of the girl's face. She drew near to her side.

"Give me the paper, Sadie, for that I now know to be your name," she said, in a low, kind tone, at the same time gently taking the paper and placing it in her bosom. "And—Sadie, God knows I pity you; I will not desert you."

She paused for a moment, and a tear dimmed her eye as the girl leaned forward trustfully, and laid her hot head, with its rare wealth of golden hair, in her lap.

And Lady Maud, with her large, masculine hand, gently stroked the shining tresses, and softly patted the now haggard cheek. Then, as a heavy sigh broke from her ample bosom, she said, in a voice just above a whisper:

"I can not tell you, my child, how it is—she hesitated, but almost instantly resumed, "that I am led to you. My heart does warm for you, and I would do you a service. Alas, poor child, I say it with shame, I have stood by and seen many dark crimes committed. And I have heard pitiable, gurgling death-moans and cries for help as knives were clashing! And then, with a callous heart and an undimmed eye, I have seen struggling limbs straightened out in death! Oh, God! And, Sadie, a dark fate is in store for you! Do not interrupt me. This man would force you into a horrible, loveless marriage for money! But in me you have a warm, yearning friend—one who now knows your story well—one who pities your youth, and who would see you go forth from this house unspotted and untrammelled; one who would allay the anguish of your poor father's bosom—one who would assist you to find him whom you love! You see, my child, I know all."

Again she paused—again she stroked the golden hair of the sorrowing girl.

Then Sadie raised her head and took Lady Maud's hands gently within hers; and the woman did not withdraw them. She seemed like a different person.

"Again I say, my dear madam, may God bless you. Oh! can you not help me hence? And can you not go with me?" and she laid her cheek close to that of the Lady Maud, and gazed appealingly in her face.

The woman started violently, and then a wild, convulsive shudder swept over her frame. Then, as she rallied, she suddenly drew the girl tenderly to her, and in her own strong grasp pressed her to her bosom.

And now tears were falling fast from the eyes of Lady Maud; and that broad bosom on which she had pillowed the fair head of Sadie Sayton was rising and falling tumultuously—like unto the sea, shaken by rude winds.

Then, in a low, agonized voice, she spoke:

"No! no! my child!" she exclaimed.

"I can not take you hence; no, alas! can I go with you. My hands are tied, Sadie. I am bound by a fearful power—one which now I can not openly break. Oh, God! my child, how your words sink into my soul! How I would long to fling behind me past regrets—to bury my remorse and my repentance deep down in a bottomless grave and flee with you! But—but—not yet! not yet! . . . Hark you, my child," and she suddenly sunk her voice, which had gradually rose to a swelling pitch down to a low underbreath; "as I have said, you have awakened singular emotions in my bosom—emotions which for years have lain dormant—dead—as I supposed. I am drawn toward you as by some magnetic influence. . . . If you will listen to me, my child, I will tell you a sad tale, one which perhaps will prove to you that I am not altogether as bad as I seem, nor am I to blame wholly for the part I now play. . . . I will tell you of certain dark secrets of the dead years, which first crushed my heart, and then made it callous to all cries for help and mercy. Will you listen, Sadie?" and she again patted softly the cheek laid against her bosom.

The girl nodded, and straightening up seated herself in a chair near Lady Maud,

still retaining one of the woman's large hands. And then her soft blue eyes dwelt inquiringly, trustingly, on the woman's face.

Before speaking, however, Lady Maud arose to her feet, entered the passage-way without, and listened intently for a moment. Then she returned and closed the door behind her. She seated herself by Sadie's side, and placing her arm around the maiden's waist, she began a strange and fearfully thrilling tale.

This weird recital told by the Lady Maud to Sadie, that cold winter morning, in the strange room of the mysterious Locust street mansion, can not now, nor in this story, be laid before the reader; for, though intensely thrilling—even fearful in its details, we must confess that it has no practical bearing in the story we are weaving.

We therefore forbear to give it. A time may come when it will be proper to write up and spread in these columns several mysteries, of which we have no more than hinted in the romance we are writing. Not until that period arrives, however, will we draw aside the veil covering these dark, hideous secrets—that of the Lady Maud included—preferring to let them rest on in oblivion.

A long time—certainly two hours—elapsed before the Lady Maud, who had not paused once, finished. When she ceased, Sadie's face was bathed in tears; and forgetting her own position—forgetting, in fact, that she needed sympathy—she arose to her feet, and flinging her arms around the woman's neck, exclaimed:

"Oh, hideous, monstrous wrong! Oh, my dear friend, from the bottom of my heart I pity you! Again I beg you, let us go hence. We will fly together; and when—when my mission is accomplished, I will take you to my own sweet home in the wildwoods of the South, where I can safely promise you an asylum for the remainder of your days!"

The Lady Maud trembled like a leaf; the changing hues that flashed through her bosom—the deep corrugations of the brow, told of the conflict raging between those emotions.

Suddenly she exclaimed:

"Oh, God! my child, how you tempt me! Cease! cease! for now it can not be. But—but, Sadie Sayton, you are near unto my heart, and I'll stand by you, and save you from the fate which awaits you. Ay! I'll do it, though perdition stood in my way! And now good-by, Sadie. Be brave, be hopeful, and, above all things, guard well the dagger you possess. It may be the means, at last, of your safety. Trust me. 'Tis all I ask."

With that, the Lady Maud, after imprinting a warm, earnest kiss upon Sadie's brow, arose to her feet, and left the room. And, as she had always done, she closed the door, and locking it from the outside, held Sadie a prisoner, as ever.

Lady Maud paused as she entered the hallway.

The light from the gas in the entry below flashed faintly upward, and striking the well-burnished glass of a window on the opposite side, fell directly on the woman's face.

Strange to say, a smile, sardonic, fiendish and mocking, was curling the lip of the Lady Maud.

Had the woman been toying with Sadie Sayton? Had she been simply playing a well-studied, oft-acted role?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A QUARTER GRAIN OF MORPHINE.

THE day passed slowly away. About four o'clock in the afternoon, Willis Wildfern rung the bell at the mansion in Locust street. He was quickly admitted by Lady Maud.

A long and earnest conversation took place between the two.

Wildfern smiled grimly, yet in a satisfied manner, when he learned that a person had called for the ring, the night before, and that that person was our acquaintance, Frank Hayworth, the actor.

The man had laid his plans well, and he now knew that he had his game at advantage.

While sitting in the parlor this afternoon, he suddenly drew from his pocket a small parcel. Opening it, he let fall its contents into a glass half full of water. Then he handed the glass to Lady Maud, at the same time glancing at her significantly.

The woman started, and looked at him fearfully.

"What is it, captain?" she asked.

"Morphine, Lady Maud."

"Morphine! A fearful dose! And for whom, Willis Wildfern?" and the woman did not take the glass.

The man frowned, and an oath was upon his lips; but he kept it back. He had keenly noted the change of deportment in Lady Maud, and he dared not offend her. He was afraid of the woman since that stormy night of the altercation, a few evenings before. She had shown then an insubordination, nay, a spirit of desperation, which was altogether quite unusual with her. His policy was to soothe—to conciliate; and Wildfern could do this. He was an adept at many things—he was a good actor.

"Morphine! Yes, dear Lady Maud," he said. "The dose is not large; the powder contains a large amount of sugar. My object simply is to stupefy and bewilder

the girl, that when she awakes she will the more readily consent to be my wife. There is only a quarter-grain of the opiate, Lady Maud."

"Are you telling me the truth, Willis Wildfern? The truth, before God and man?" asked the woman, sternly.

"What do you know about God?" asked the man, with a sneer, and in a tone which he could not disguise.

"Little enough, Captain Willis, but enough to fear Him!" was the quiet reply.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Wildfern, attempting all the time to evade the question. "You are turning moralist, Lady Maud! Ha! ha!"

Despite his laugh and mocking tone, however, there was a deep seriousness in the man's meaning; he did indeed fear that this woman who had so long been his tool was turning "moralist," as he phrased it.

But Lady Maud was in earnest. She kept her eyes bent on the man, as she said, firmly:

"You may laugh as you wish, captain; but I can tell you one thing: I'll not give this draught to Sadie Sayton unless you swear solemnly to me that it contains no more than a quarter-grain of morphine."

"Sadie Sayton! Ha! You know, then, her name, my dear Lady Maud?" and Wildfern gazed furiously at her. "Whence did you derive your knowledge?" and his gaze deepened into one of the most icy-like sternness.

Wildfern was thinking of the money—the large sum which stood at the head of old Colonel Sayton's advertisement. That day, ever since the notice in the morning paper had caught his eye, he himself had been laying some deep-laid plans. He had reasoned with his own dark self that it would be very nice—indeed, highly diplomatic—if he could, under his own name, win as his wife, by force and threats, such a queenly girl as Sadie Sayton, and then, under a disguise, or through Wild Tom, claim fifty thousand dollars, good money, as the reward for furnishing information of the girl. It seems the villain, in his schemings, never took old Colonel Sayton into account.

Now, all at once, he thought things were taking a different turn. Was Lady Maud aiming, too, for the reward-money?

All this revolved in his mind as he asked the woman the question he did. Then, as his eyes were riveted on her face, he awaited her answer.

This was not slow in coming.

"Where did I get my knowledge? Ha! ha! I hope you have not forgotten that I can read, and that I sometimes peruse the papers! More than that, the girl answers to the name of Sadie; I have tried her."

"You have? Indeed! You have an inquiring mind, Lady Maud; and a dispassionate mind, too! What did you tell the girl of me?" and he glanced at her fiercely.

"Nothing to your detriment, Willis Wildfern; though, had I been inclined to use it, I had ample material at hand," said the woman, in response.

"You speak well—boldly, Lady Maud!" muttered the man, still endeavoring to keep down his anger.

To this the woman did not reply, but fixing her eyes on him, said:

"This is nonsense, captain! Answer me—nay, swear to me that that water contains only a single quarter-grain of morphine."

The man winced, but he knew that the other's eyes were fixed upon him, and he was compelled to reply:

"I swear to you, then, that what I have told you is the truth," he said. "But, why are you so particular about this matter? Methinks from your frequent administrations of the same remedy, under other circumstances, you had grown used to it, and to watching its wondrous effect."

"I will be frank with you, Wildfern," said the woman, after a slight pause, "I am tired of your rule, and—nay, do not interrupt me so soon—and I will be glad when the day comes that you will find no more villainy to do! More than that, I will be doubly rejoiced when the hour comes for us to part. Now, in this particular case, I will not administer a powerful drug, because the girl is already weak and faint, and a large dose would assuredly kill her. I will no longer be accessory to murder!"

Willis Wildfern bent his head, and pondered for several minutes. We can not, or rather shall not, attempt to tell what was passing in his mind.

However, when he looked up, his face, if not smiling, was certainly not frowning. He said, calmly:

"Very good. As you say, Lady Maud! We will not quarrel. Administer the small dose this time, and, the hour for our separation may be nearer than you think!"

There was a world of latent meaning in Willis Wildfern's words.

Perhaps the Lady Maud did not fathom deep enough for that meaning; perhaps she did.

And in a few moments Wildfern arose to his feet. He placed his hand in his pocket, and drew out a large roll of new money—in paper. Reaching it over to Lady Maud, he said, in a low, significant tone:

"Here, Lady Maud, is a present. The notes are from our old mint in the cemetery—the first series of the new issue, struck off there. Take the notes; they will purchase as much as old SAYTON'S FIFTY THOUSAND



IN GREENBACKS. But now I must go. Expect me late to-night, and be surprised at nothing."

Then he left the house.

CHAPTER XXIX. ON THE SCENT.

As soon as Willis Wildfern was gone—and the night had then fallen—Lady Maud hurried up-stairs with the goblet in hand. Only a moment or so elapsed before she stood in Sadie's room.

She waited not to answer the girl's curiosity, but leaning down, whispered some words in her ear. And then she placed the goblet of water by her side.

Rising to her full height she turned to go, but as she neared the door, she paused and said:

"Be brave, Sadie; be true to yourself, and—do not forget your dagger!"

And then she was gone.

It must have been near twelve o'clock that same night, when Willis Wildfern, disguised as we have seen him on former occasions, stood at the door of Sadie Sayton's room. He hesitated but a moment.

Turning the bolt he entered. He glanced like lightning around him.

Sadie was seated quietly in a chair by the bed.

The goblet was empty.

"We must go back a little way in our story, for the sake of having an even and unbroken thread—our aim thus far."

When Wildfern left the mansion of Lady Maud, early that evening, he hurried into Walnut street. There he paused and glanced around him. A car was in sight coming along slowly. The man walked down to meet it, and then sprang aboard.

He had not observed a tall, brawny man, who had emerged from the gloom on the shady side of the street opposite the Locust street mansion, and followed on softly behind him. He had not seen this figure, which hung upon his track like a phantom.

Wildfern was wrapped up in his own plans—undoing some—building up others. And then, too, the recent interview with Lady Maud had resulted in a manner he had not anticipated.

He was thinking of this, too, and arranging other plans to meet certain indications and conditions which were suddenly sprung upon him by the bold, decided *madam*, as he termed it, of the woman who had worked with him, and whom he had befriended for years.

Willis Wildfern was cogitating about the separation to take place between him and Lady Maud; and he instinctively fondled the handle of a knife in the breast-pocket of his inside coat.

That the man was satisfied with his plans was very certain; for when he reached Walnut street—and the distance was not great—he smiled grimly to himself.

He had not seen the tall man who had dogged him. But that man had seen him.

As soon as Wildfern was in the cars the person, who had stepped into the shade of a house at the corner, shrugged his shoulders, and turning at once retraced his steps toward the Locust street mansion. This man seemed to court obscurity—walking on the thin, unlit side of the street; but as he passed near a lamp, the reflection of the light struck, for an instant, full upon his person.

As quick and fleeting as was the flash from the lamp, it revealed a bright row of brass buttons, and a star glittering on the breast of the man's coat; also a heavy baton belted in a sling around the waist.

Then the person was in the shade again, and he was still hurrying on toward Locust street.

In a few moments he turned into this latter thoroughfare, still keeping the shady side. And then he joined a companion, who stood motionless in the gloom directly opposite the residence of Lady Maud.

The men were policemen.

Perhaps they had been sent by—well, by Frank Hayworth—to watch this mysterious house.

When the actor had called for the ring, he was not particularly pleased with the appearance of the woman who had held the door half open to answer his summons.

As he had walked away he linked together, in his mind, the advertised ring and Sadie Sayton; then the latter, by some strange concatenation of thought, with the suspicious house, so closely locked and shut in to itself.

Besides that, since his short sojourn in the city, Frank Hayworth had heard some very singular, very startling reports of this house.

So perhaps these belted guardians of the night had been dispatched thither on a term of duty, at the instance of the actor.

And there they stood, silent and almost motionless—their forms mingling with the surrounding gloom. But they were not drowsy nor inattentive. Their eyes kept vigilant watch over the house, and its adjacent surroundings.

As for the mansion it was wrapped in absolute quiet, and not a light from the black, somber pile gleamed forth on the night.

Willis Wildfern did not get out of the car until it had reached the Schuylkill. Here he sprang out, and hurrying along Twenty-third street, at last reached Market. Here he paused for a moment, and, for the time, seemed lost in reflection.

He did not consume many moments thus; for suddenly he turned abruptly to the left, and strode away toward the Market street bridge. Some moments elapsed before he stood on the opposite side.

Skirting along the river-bank, he was speedily swallowed up in the gloom.

When we saw the man next, he was crossing Columbia bridge. This did not take any length of time. Then diving down by the bank of the river, he pushed his way along as fast as he could, and as circumstances would allow.

Willis Wildfern was in earnest. That his business was serious, or urgent, was likewise apparent. The man would not have taken such a long walk, and so incommoded himself, on this, one of the coldest nights of the winter, for a trifling stake.

On he strode, never pausing once. He seemed gifted with wonderful power of endurance for one as luxurious as he. All this energy may have been developed by the stimulus of the object in view. That he had an object in view there can be no doubt.

On he went, winding around the tall, frowning bluffs which bordered the banks of the river. At one time his figure could be seen by the faint starlight of the night; at another it would be wholly obscured in the deep gloom of the lovely road or—more properly speaking—path.

At length he reached the rear of Laurel Hill cemetery. Above him, on the heights, slept in almost absolute quiet the lone city of the dead.

The mournful sighing of the night-wind through the leafless branches of the trees, made a sad, melancholy music, which echoed down the bluff, that cold night, and fell on Wildfern's ear.

The man paused, and an involuntary shudder crept over his frame. He glanced quickly around him, as if he expected to see arise at his elbow some grim and ghastly phantom. Wildfern covered away against a snow-covered rock as these fears swept over him; and in the sighing of the night-wind, he fancied he heard with awful distinctness the gibberings of a lost spirit.

The man shook in every limb, and clung closer to the rock.

Suddenly, however, he drew from his breast-pocket a flask, and placing it to his lips, took a long, deep draught.

"Ha! ha!" he exclaimed, as he placed the bottle out of sight. "That gives me life and strength! That gives me courage to face a hundred devils, and to care nothing for—for—the pale faces which will rise up around me! And why should I care for them? They are cold—dead! Nay, they have moldered beneath the turf!"

"Turf! Are they beneath the turf? Oh! God! no—not! no! But, they can not harm me now, for they are dead—dead! I must go on! I must win the heart, or crush the impious soul of Sadie Sayton! Oh! the wild dream of bliss which floats through my brain as I think of her! She shall be mine! Nothing shall thwart me—nay, not even heaven itself!"

As he spoke he hurried on again along the snow-covered path. He proceeded some minutes without stopping; but, at length he paused, and turning abruptly to the right, commenced to climb the steep acclivity.

This did not consume many minutes. When the man stood on the top, he glanced hurriedly around him through the gloom in every direction.

What he feared, or what he was looking for, in this lonely place, it were hard to conjecture. But Willis Wildfern was wary, and with or without reason he now looked around him keenly.

Naught, however, save the pale, dull-white marbles, gleaming with a spectral pallor all around, fell upon his gaze.

Then he plunged on again.

Suddenly he paused and stood as still as a statue; for at his feet, showing distinctly in the gloom, was the impression of footprints in the snow.

A tremor passed over the man's frame, a pallor, though it could not be seen, sprung to his face. He leaned down and examined the tracks closely. They were made by a large boot, and they were deeply indented, as if he who walked was a heavy man, and trod boldly. And they led in the same direction that he was going!

Wildfern slowly arose to an erect posture, and glanced again, cautiously, around him.

Despite the bitter cold, despite the strong draught he had swallowed, he trembled like a leaf, and a sweat broke out profusely on his face.

Once more he drew out the flask, and applying it to his lips, drank deeply, almost draining the contents before he breathed.

"I must begone!" he muttered. "I feel a deep gloom hanging over me! I feel a rope around my neck! But—but—I feel Sadie shall be mine! They for a final settlement of old scores with certain parties, and—I'll be off! Philadelphia, nay, the broad land itself, will be too hot for me, and that in a very few days. Once this ravishingly-beautiful girl conquered, then, my Lady Maud, we may measure our hatred and our knives! But I must begone."

So saying, he turned at right-angles to the direction in which he was first proceeding and strode away quickly.

After walking on for some two hundred yards, he again turned to the left, virtually resuming the old course he had left. He paused not at all, for the night was deep-

ening, and Wildfern had work enough before him ere the coming of the dawn.

All at once, however, he stopped, as a small, bright light flashed out from a gloomy pile before him.

"Ha!" he muttered, in an anxious tone, "Tom is careless! and—and—there are visitors on the hill!"

So speaking, he hurried on, and in a moment had entered the vault and closed the door. In an instant, then, the light ceased to shine.

Scarcely had Wildfern entered the vault, when a noiseless band, consisting of at least twenty men, suddenly emerged from the gloom, and drew silently around the vault.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 25.)

My Sister's Dream.

BY MARY LEE.

AGATHA came down looking pale and listless.

"What is the matter, Agatha? Haven't you slept well?" my mother asked.

"No; I have scarcely slept at all; and when I did, my dreams were so frightful that I dreaded sleeping lest they should be repeated."

"The nightmare, Aggy," said I. "I told you last night that a cup of chocolate was the worst thing possible just before going to bed."

"What a wonderfully wise sister I have! Mother, I wonder you ever thought it necessary to send me to school, while Sarah knows so much more than it is needful she should, that she might simply have told me all I want to know, and thus saved me the trouble of acquiring it."

"My dear sister, telling is not sufficient in your case. If it were, you might have enjoyed a good night's rest, and come down in better humor this morning."

"Stop, stop, my children. I am ashamed of you both. Aggy, you are certainly allowing your irritability to grow on you; and you, Sarah, must adopt a different tone in talking to your sister. Without meaning to be unkind, you are, at times, almost offensive."

By this time Agatha was in tears and I was feeling rather guilty.

"Come, tell us your dream, sister, and perhaps we two Josepha can interpret it for you on other than chocolate grounds."

But Aggy was slow to be comforted, and when she finally did wipe her eyes she flatly refused to say one word about her dream, and so the matter rested.

A few days after I was sewing in my room when Agatha came in with, "Where is your ivory miniature, Sarah? Miss Clark is down-stairs and wants to have one painted."

I blushed to the roots of my hair.

Agatha looked at me in amazement.

"Sarah Carlton, you have given that picture away."

"Have I?"

"Yes; I am confident of it. Well, it does not seem possible! How many times have I heard you say that no man should ever have your likeness unless you had promised to be his wife!"

"People change their mind."

"Yes, ordinary people; but you—Then, as if a new thought had suddenly struck her—"Sarah, are you engaged to Mr. Dessaur?"

"Yes."

"And mother knows nothing of it?"

"It was not necessary to tell her. She is perplexed enough about your *toussaint* without mine to think of, too. We are to be married privately as soon as he returns, which will be next month. I will wear a traveling-dress, and go off quietly. I am bent on having my own way in this matter, and as I knew mother would never consent to it, I determined to say nothing until it was too late for her to raise objection."

"Do you expect me to keep your secret?"

"Certainly you will. I am not going to run away with Leonis. We will be married here. I only keep it from mother to save her a great deal of unnecessary trouble and anxiety."

That night I could not sleep, and after tossing about for two hours I resolved to get up and read. Scarcely had I done so, however, when I heard my sister's voice from the next room.

"So you drink chocolate, too, before going to bed? I thought you were too wise for that!"

"I am sure it isn't chocolate," I said, "for I have not tasted any in weeks; but I can not sleep."

"Neither can I. So I shall get up and keep you company."

In another minute she had got her slippers and dressing-gown on, and was in my room.

"What are you reading; Wilkie Collins? Good heavens! Sarah, how can you read that man's works after midnight? His *Armada* frightened me although I read it in the middle of the day."

I laughed and she went on: "I don't believe that you are one bit braver than I am. It is sheer affectation."

As I made no reply she walked to my bureau, pulled open one of the drawers and said she would straighten it up for me. In a few minutes her busy hands stopped.

"Sarah!"

"Well!"

"Didn't you tell me that you had given your miniature to Mr. Dessaur?"

"Yes."

"You were mistaken. Here it is."

I dropped my book, crossed the room, took the ivory case in my hand, and found my own likeness confronting me.

"Where is the other one?" I asked, after a moment's pause.

"Mine?"

"Yes."

She turned to the drawer and hunted through it. No other picture was to be found.

Then I laughed. "Aggy, Louis Dessaur is wearing your likeness next his heart instead of mine. He had no time to open it when I placed it in his hand, for mother was at the door. But what is the matter? You look as frightened as if you had seen a ghost."

"I don't feel well, and think I had better lie down."

"What can I do for you?"

"Nothing; I only want rest. Good-night."

She passed into her room and closed the door.

Two hours later, when my eyes began to feel heavy, I threw away my book and got ready for bed. Then glancing into my sister's room I found her sleeping quietly.

The next morning Agatha expressed a wish to go to New Orleans, where we had a relative living. My mother made no objection to her going, for the visit had been long promised. She was astonished, however, at Agatha's desire to set out that day.

All remonstrances were thrown to the wind. My sister would, and did, leave us before night, taking with her our adopted brother, a lad of seventeen.

When my mother found that Agatha was determined on going that day, she sent a telegram to her cousin stating when the young lady might be expected. And in due course of time we received a line from our runaway, informing us that she had arrived safely at her destination.

Three weeks passed and then my mother received a telegram from her cousin. It was short, as such things always are, and horrible, as they are so likely to be. This ran:

"Come at once. Agatha is dying."

When we reached New Orleans we found my brother waiting for us.

"She is living," was all the poor boy could say in answer to my mother's mute inquiry.

She was living when we stole noiselessly into her room, and stood horror-stricken by her bedside.

"Yes, she was living, but before one hour had passed, her mother and sister were kneeling by that bedside praying God to take her to himself.

Her delirium was frightful to witness.

"Pray heaven that she may not recover," was the physician's answer to our questions. "Her brain is a total wreck; should she be physically restored, her mind is forever gone. Mentally the shock has killed her."

Then we learned what the shock was.

George Benton, my sister's affianced husband, was in Mexico when Louis Dessaur made my acquaintance and obtained my promise to be his wife. Immediately after that event Dessaur went to Cuba on business, and when just about to leave the island, was unexpectedly called to the city of Mexico.

At a late supper one night, the two men, total strangers to each other, met.

Wine had circulated freely, and neither of the men were quite free from its effects, when, by some accident, my sister's miniature, which I had given Dessaur in mistake, fell from his pocket.

Benton picked it up, and, as he was handing it back, the well-known features flashed for an instant on his gaze.

Instead of giving it to Dessaur, he clutched it tightly in his hand.

"You have no right to this bit of property, sir," he said, in a tone at once angry and insolent. "It is mine."

Dessaur's eyes flashed fire.

"Hand me that miniature!"

"Not while there is life in my body."

"Are you serious?"

"You will find me so."

"Are you prepared for the consequences?"

"I am prepared to shoot you down like a dog for daring to claim it."

I have said that the young men had been drinking; so had the dozen friends who sat with them at table, and who were now eager lookers-on.

Two minutes' calm conversation would have explained all, but there was no one there capable of two minutes' calm conversation.

They were in a lawless city, and lawless means were taken to settle their dispute.

Twelve paces were measured off, and pistols placed in the hands of those two men who were almost brothers.

"One, two, fire!" the men spoke, quickly, for steps were heard on the stairs, and they feared an interruption.

The door was burst open as two pistol shots rang through the air, and a woman's wild shrieks filled the room.

"My dream! my dream!" she cried, throwing herself on her lover's lifeless form. "I saw it all in my dream. They fought for my likeness! I knew it would happen! My God, why did I not arrive a minute sooner!"

By the time the authorities arrived, Des-

saur had fled, Benton had breathed his last, and my sister was a maniac.

In a few days our prayers were answered. My sister's sufferings were ended, and she had gone to meet her lover in a better world.

How He Was Won.

BY COL. LEON LAFITTE.

"You are the greatest mope I ever saw, Lou; here you sit day after day, and night after night, instead of going out and enjoying yourself."

"I know it, Ayres, but I take little pleasure in society, and prefer to write: it drowns thought, you know."

"Drowns yourself, you mean; but come, get ready, for you must go home with me to-night—my cousin, Katie Merrill, has arrived at home, and there's lots of company and fun for the evening. Don't say no; I won't listen to it, and I have your promise."

With a sigh, Louis Strange laid aside his pen, and hastily dressing himself, went off with his friend Ayres Merrill.

The two had been college mates, and were boon companions of about the same age. "Lou" Strange, as he was commonly called, had, when twenty-one, fallen in love with a lovely girl of his native village, and believing her true, he had given her the whole wealth of his deep affection; but she was false to him, and married another man.

Since then, he had known no trust in woman.

Leaving his home, almost broken-hearted, he had settled in New York, and possessing a literary turn of mind, had devoted himself to writing. It was not long before his writings attracted attention, and he soon found himself rapidly becoming famous. All endeavors of his friends, among whom was Ayres Merrill, who resided in New York, to get him into society, were unavailing; but, having promised Ayres that he would be introduced to his cousin, Katie Merrill, when she came to the city, he kept his promise, and, as the reader has seen, went with his friend to the sociable at the residence of Mrs. Merrill.

"Katie, this is my friend, Mr. Strange; my cousin, Miss Merrill, Mr. Strange."

The beauty, for she was indeed beautiful, bowed, hesitated, and then holding out her hand to the young writer, said:

"We must be friends, Mr. Strange, if you will allow it, for I have read with so much pleasure, your writings."

Lou Strange took the proffered hand, and while acknowledging his thanks for her compliment to his genius, could not but admit that she was lovely.

The crowd around the belle gave him room, and shortly afterward he was promenading, with Katie on his arm, the envy of the gentlemen present.

In the quiet loneliness of his rooms Lou Strange sat and mused over his *révéries* into society.

"What have I to care for in woman," he muttered; "if she whom I love as pure and good as angels could deceive me, how can I trust in the goodness of any of her sex. I will see Miss Merrill no more, for, like all other women, she must wear a false heart under that bright and beautiful mask."

"See her no more!" Did he keep that self-made promise, reader? Let the sequel show.

"Well, old fellow, is not Katie lovely? Oh, you woman-hater! you mean never to be won by any woman; how did you behave last night? They all noticed your devotion to Katie. But jesting aside, Lou, you are engaged for dinner at my house to-day, so throw aside that old quill, and come," said the gay Ayres Merrill, bustling into his friend's room the morning after the sociable.

Half willing, half reluctant, Lou went with his friend, and so again he met the beauty, Katie Merrill. And thus the days made weeks, and the weeks made months, and Lou Strange again loved, more devotedly than had been the old love. And Katie—was she indifferent to Lou's love? No; from the first she had admired him, and her admiration had rapidly ripened into love when she knew more of him, and she determined to win his great, noble heart for herself, to shelter her in coming years.

At last he told her all; of his former love, and the deceit he had found in her he trusted; he told her that, as bitterly as he had once hated women for what one had made him suffer, he now loved her for what she was to him, and asked her to be his wife.

Lou and Katie were married, and Ayres Merrill was perfectly happy when he knew the result of his plan to win Lou over from woman-hating.

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READIE AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
93 William Street, New York.

Saturday Journal

Published every Tuesday morning at nine o'clock.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 29, 1870.

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Contributors and Correspondents.

The two short stories, *HOW NELLY MADE HER DECISION* and *THE DIVIDED LOVE*, we return, having too much of an overstock of that class of matter. *Poem, What is a Church?* will do to keep out of the paper. The chap that wrote it probably has forgotten that his mother used to pray there—that his sister once sang in the choir—that his father used to love "his quiet shade and religious tales." If some churches are not what the Puritans prayed for and the Poor Fishermen planted, it is not strange, seeing that no government, no society, nothing done by man, is perfect. *Story, MARRIAGE A LIBERTY* is quite unavailable. The author neither writes correctly, nor expresses her ideas well—two serious drawbacks to success in authorship. *THE SISTER'S CRIME* not available, and returned. *SAVED BY A PANTHER* not available, and MS. destroyed. *RUNNING THE GANTLET* of no use to us. MS. returned to author. *THE CRUCIFIXION*—A pleasant tale, pleasantly told. *MISS PRYDM ON BABIES* we return. The matter is not new. Not that the author has plagiarized, but the theme is trite, and nothing particularly original is said. *JAMES LEROY*, your rhymes to Miss Nelson not good enough for print. Author ask for their return but sends no stamps. *MS. HOW JAMES' SECRETS WERE DISCOVERED*, not available, and returned. *THE PHYSICIAN'S ADVENTURE*, by Timon, is wholly worthless as a composition. The author owes us to "entertain it." We are not equal to the labor, to-day. "Timon" must look up a schoolmaster. MS. not preserved. *THE SAND FORT* we can not find place for some time—having a considerable overstock of that class of matter—hence return it, that the author may send it elsewhere. *Rhyme, MY SUBJECT*, can hardly be called poetry. Not available. *THE END OF AN UNBROKEN THOUGHT* we shall not be able to use. No stamps. MS. not preserved. *MS. BY W. H. B.* we shall have to pass over to "the Morrice." The writer evidently writes of what he knows by hearsay rather than by experience. It is, in literary work, better to sail in seas which you have sounded than to drift out into deeps you know not of. Will use sketches, CONDENSED TO BE SHOT AND THE FIGHT IN THE DARK.—Ditto, FANNY'S STRATEGY.—Ditto, CAPTAIN ARNOTT'S FLIRTATION.

"Japhet" is entitled to a year's subscription. Whether or not he has found his father, he may confound other boys' fathers, by such contributions as this:
Joe Jot is American,
(Echo: *A merry-cuss!*)
Beat Time is Diogenes,
(Echo: *Do you know his name?*)
While Whitcomb is a Clericus,
(Echo: *A clear-cuss!*)
Among the L. L. D's,
(Echo: *The fiddle-de-dee!*)
Japhet must be a better boy or he will have to stay Friday evenings, after school is out, to take a lesson in cherry logic.

Several communications in regard to the "Help Evil" we care not to give place. That the evil is one correctable by newspaper comment is not our opinion. The remedy, as we have shown, lies with the daughters and women of America. Let them do their own work for a season; let those employing two "helps" where one will answer, dispense with one; let mistresses be firm to exact the service they bargain for, and the "evil" is shown of half its terrors. No use to look longingly to the Chinese. They never will work singly in our houses. For our house servants we must remain dependent on foreigners, that is very evident.

Foolscap Papers.

The Earth, According to a Fellow on the Other Side.

THE discovery of the earth, made by Washington in 1776, was one of the most important events that ever happened to the inhabitants thereof. It occupies a space in space upon which no other planet dare infringe—all infringers will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law—wheels itself through all its course with the facility of a regular born and bred wheelbarrow, at a rate which is bankrupting, and is one of the most desirable means of summer travel that Jim Fisk ever had the sole control of. The temperature varies from cold to hot, and only on certain occasions is just right, according to taste, as the old lady casually remarked "when she kissed the prodigal calf in the story of the fatted son." Owing to the extreme selfishness of the people of China, night is only about twelve hours or so long, or rather short, when, to suit us, it should be twenty-three out of the twenty-four at least.

The North Pole with which Dr. Hall recently jerked a larger haul out of Congress, furnishes most of the conundrums for insane individuals. The South Pole hasn't been reconstructed since the war, and is therefore left out in the cold.

A very large part of the earth is composed of water, and called the sea, origin-

nally designed as a skating rink for Neptune, but as soon as S. N. Pike succeeds in having it drained off or emptied into Symme's Hole, it will much increase the building facilities of New York.

Land on the mountain-tops and on Broadway is remarkably high, and the lower oil wells are the higher they are.

The sun and the moon, which seriously interfere with the gas business, have been engaged by General Grant to continue their little light for the ensuing season, notwithstanding the protests of the gas companies. You may see the sun every morning when you get up at eleven o'clock.

The earth is inhabited by two-legged man and I wouldn't object at any time to be married woman.

The habits of man are very strange; each one lives off his neighbor, and the neighbor lives off of somebody else. The habits of woman are very expensive; in fact, it is said that to keep up the articles of dress, their tables are often as bare as their shoulders.

Man was created to live, eat, indorse, notes and die, that is, die if he can spare enough time in pursuit of his neighbor's pocket-book to think about such a thing at all, and the undertaker is reasonable.

Mankind is divided into three classes, viz: farmers, those who live on what they eat, and rich uncles who live on in spite of all that indigent and indignant nephews can pray for.

These, in turn, are subdivided into two classes: wise men and fools. Wise men keep their own tongue—and their wives pay all debts they can't get out of—vote a straight ticket, lend me five dollars, and buy the SATURDAY STAR JOURNAL. Others exactly the reverse.

The eastern continent is divided into small farms—Europe, Asia and the blessed land of the amendment.

The western is divided into small building lots, such as Rhode Island, Massachusetts, etc. The products of Massachusetts are mountains, Emerson and school-teachers.

The proper study of mankind is man—that is also the proper study of woman; and the question of the hour is, what is he worth? And the answer, after marriage, is nothing! Woman can do nothing but di-vorce. A Western divorce is surer than sure shot for rats, and very marketable.

The course of the earth is eastward, but the people generally go west. "The dearest spot on earth to me" is Long Branch.

Travelers are entirely at the mercy of steamboat captains, who run into any thing that is "found floating in the bay" with destruction that is only equaled by the next accident they have, after they have been presented with new boats for the purpose.

There are four seasons in each year, and they were instituted by milliners and dress-makers: the year is also divided into months and days, for convenience in computing interest. A year, except in some women's ages, is three hundred and sixty-five days thick.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

LIFE.

CHILDHOOD. The happiest period of human existence—a time when we can pour out our complaints, our little trials and vexations, into a mother's ear—hours when we can run about barefooted without having "people talk"—a time when we can romp and play tag, and do a thousand and one things which would seem extremely unladylike were we out of our short dresses—a time when, if we receive an insult from our young companions, we can answer them with the withering words and fearful threat of, "I'll tell my mother of you!"

How often I have used those very words myself!

Yet, childhood has its grievances. We have to study so hard, and sit so still in school, when we feel we would give hundreds of dollars (if we had them) to take a run in the fresh air. Yet, don't we feel proud on exhibition day, when we walk up and receive our diploma as a reward for days and weeks, and months of hard study? When our little comrades around us die, and we see them put in their little graves, don't we wonder whether God won't let them play in heaven, and if there are not heavenly toys for the little angels? I used to wonder about that, many and many a time.

YOUTH. A time when we commence to feel more than friendship for the opposite sex. It was well enough for you to run about with cousin Harry when he and you were youngsters, but quite improper now! We begin to pay particular attention to our looks and general appearance; hair oils and cosmetics are now needed articles for our toilets, and the looking-glass is more looked into than formerly. Somebody pays us particular attention, and our dreams are somehow mixed up with that somebody. Somebody whispers a word in our ears, and we answer "yes!"

Of course that means—we are engaged.

If Charley don't come to see us on the evening he promised, then we get angry, and a foolish lovers' quarrel ensues; we wish we were in our cold, cold graves, and only want to die; and yet we keep on eating beefsteak and potatoes to keep us alive! The rupture is cured, and Charley and we are friends again. Milliners, dress-

makers, and other "fixin's" come in. A church and a parson, bridesmaids and groomsmen, a ring and a blessing, and you are a bride!

WOMANHOOD. Now we must imagine ourselves matrons, with numerous little ones toddling around us, and we listen to the same tales which we once recited at our mother's knee! This is a time when cares come thick and heavy; there is always so much to do, and seemingly so little thanks for doing it—so many clothes to mend, so many mouths to feed, and so many neighbors to watch our actions, and worry us about things, which do not concern us, and which we care nothing for. Affairs go wrong, and you are only too glad for night to come, that you may lay your head on the pillow and be at peace. You cease to imagine heaven filled with childish playthings, but more as a place of rest. Husbands will sometimes be cross, and wives will answer sharply, and forget the days when they courted each other beneath some old maple, and you said to yourself: "Well, I never could be cross to him!" Those times are passed, and we drift along into—

OLD AGE. Here we look more into the hereafter, and think of the dark river we all must cross. If we are wealthy, thoughts will come to us that those whom we are to leave behind will war over our property. If we are poor, we wonder if the few feet of earth which is to hold our poor body will be begrudged to us. But we know that, if the weary heart has ceased its beating, and no one on earth cares for it, there is a mansion above awaiting us, and a heavenly host to greet us, who will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" *Vale!* EVE LAWLESS.

HINTS TO YOUNG WRITERS.

HAVE you ever had a piece declined, reader? Has that "respectfully" ever struck you as a mockery, and have you ever declared eternal war and enmity against all editors? Perhaps it was one of your best efforts—perhaps it was not—and you calculated on an immediate acceptance? Perhaps you burned midnight oil over it, and dreamed in bed you saw it in print, to find that visions sometimes work by opposites, and are what the Irish would call very con-trary. You have declared to yourself, "He never read it. He couldn't have read it. My best piece, too! I'll send it somewhere else!"

These are the thoughts of many a young adventurer in the literary field, disappointment being to him no stranger. But, why despair? Buckle on your mental harness; "read, think and inwardly digest," and, having mastered a subject, try again!

Why be blind to your defects? Why not rather study to remove them, and to put something substantial in the vacuum that was before filled with thin air? He is the bravest, and shows himself the most worthy, who has met most reverses and overcome them.

Don't imagine that editors have any spite and enmity to you, nor attempt to account in some such unaccountable way for the rejection of your manuscript. Editors are only too glad to get really good matter, and can easily tell such at a glance. They are better judges than you, because they look at things from an impartial standpoint, while you, with the perversity and blindness of an egotistical fancy, clothe your productions in a garment of many beautiful colors, which being the exterior and the work of your fancy, alone attracts you, the real, the interior, and its small worth falling out of sight altogether. "Declined" is not rejected; and there are many essays young writers make, which only want a little care and earnest consideration, to make them acceptable. This some notice too late, when the manuscript has been returned on account of the very lack thereof when the matter is first committed to paper.

Go to work determined that what you write shall not be declined—determined to make its merit such as will prevent it.

"If you've any thing to do, do it right, or be it great or be it small."

Again: before you submit a manuscript to an editor, be sure you are sending it to a proper paper, journal, or magazine, as the case may be. Be sure that it is the right thing in the right place. A little fore-thought on this point would often prevent rejection, for, if really worthy of use, you must remember that there is a place for every thing—good.

Lastly, condense your sentiments. Say your say in the shortest way, and let the homely advice of "Boiling it Down" be followed. As the rhyme says:

"When writing an article for the press,
Whether prose or verse, just try
To utter your thoughts in the fewest words,
And let them be crisp and dry;
And when it is finished and you suppose
It does exactly brown,
Just look it over again, and then say
'Boil it down!'"

EXCELSIOR.

FLIRTING DEFINED.

IT is more serious than talking nonsense, and not so serious as making love! It is not chaff, and it is not feeling; it means something more than indifference, and yet something less than affection; it binds no one, it commits no one; it only raises expectations in the individual, and sets society on the look-out for results; it is a play-

thing in the hands of the inexperienced, but a deadly weapon against the breast of the unwary; and it is a thing so vague, so Protean, that the most accurate measurer of moral values would be puzzled to say where it exactly ends and where serious intentions begin.

Every one has his or her own ideas of what constitutes flirting; consequently every one judges of that pleasant exercise according to individual temperament and experience. Faded flowers, who see impropriety in every thing they are no longer able to enjoy, say, with more or less severity, that Henry and Angelina are flirting; if they are laughing and whispering in an alcove together, probably at the most innocent nonsense in the world; but the fact that they are enjoying themselves in their own way, albeit a silly one, is enough for the faded flower to think they are after mischief, flirting, being to her mind about the worst piece of mischief that fallen humanity can perpetrate.

Flirting is trifling. However indulged in, or to what extent, it is a using of real means in a trivial manner, for trivial purposes. All flirts, of both genders, will acknowledge this. The true smiles of love which they give could be no truer, yet they mean nothing; the sweet, half-tender words they speak could be no sweeter, no more full of smothered tenderness, if they interpreted the deepest affection, yet they are no better than burlesque. They are beautiful means, granted for earnest and profitable uses—the winning of a genuine love and the after-keeping of it—perverted to uses frivolous and unworthy, and winning only unprofitable results.

It is foolish to suppose, as many excellent young people do, that there is a wide distinction between flirting and trifling. There is in reality no distinction. If there be no trifling, there is no flirting, but only pleasant intercourse, meaning mutual entertainment—no more. There are no unconscious flirts. Flirting is an art—perhaps a fine art, surely a dangerous art; and ever and necessarily artful. Flirting may be nonsensical, but it is only nonsense to employ a semblance of the purest and tenderest reachings out of one's nature solely as snares? Is it not rather a crime? It may be very well to give a caution "not to go too far." Yet when all trifling, and especially all that which relates to the most sacred things of heart and life, is wholly wrong, and tends only to evil and unhappiness, it becomes a serious question how far one can go in triviality without danger. We advise all to ponder it thoughtfully.

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

PLEASURE, though an important element in social intercourse, is not its only end. Providing relaxation for the energies that have been overstrained, and for the mind that has been long concentrated on a single object, is not merely to afford pleasure, but to recreate the powers anew for fresh exertions. Lonely repose and inactivity is not half so effectual in refreshing the wearied system, as the new and varied activity of powers that have lain dormant during the hours of labor, and which can be best set in action by social intercourse. The views and sentiments of each person compose, as it were, a separate field of thought, and by mingling and interchanging their various products, we learn to view things in a broader light, and lose much of the conceit that is cherished by an isolated existence. By this means also, delusions are vanquished, prejudices overcome, and kindly feeling cultivated. Even friendship and love, though ennobling and beautifying life, and though productive of deeper emotions and enjoyment, can not expand our natures and widen our views, as does more extended social intercourse.

A natural impulse draws us toward those whose tastes and aims bear some resemblance to our own. To promote the fullest enjoyment of any social reunion, a certain similarity of feeling and equality of condition must exist. Yet it is chiefly in the variety of nature thus brought into contact, that the chief ends of social life are to be attained. This is most fully and beautifully exemplified in family life. Here the young and the old, the cultured and the ignorant, the strong and the feeble, all mingle in harmony; each one developing in the others some germ of character that could only have sprung into life by the blending of such various elements. The same variety, carried out in social life, would greatly promote its interests. We have in our communities too much separation between those of different ages, capacities, and occupations. The young people's party must not be invaded by their seniors; married and single are kept distinct; scholars and merchants rarely mingle; and the rich and poor must tread separate paths. Such exclusiveness always betrays a narrow culture. Those who are most widely educated will always be anxious to extend and not to limit their social sphere. They apprehend the true benefits to be gained by the mingling of ages, capacities, and conditions; they realize how, by companionship, the young insensibly reap the wisdom of age, and the old retain the freshness of youth; how the cultured elevate the less informed, while themselves gaining a practical knowledge of life that books can not confer; and how those of different pursuits or conditions can contribute something to the general stock to make life wiser, nobler, and happier than if they had not met.

A PLEA FOR PEACE.

BY R. T. CAMPBELL.

Go, pile the fruit of battle up!
Go, hide the wretches slain!
My God! has mad ambition's cup
Been filled with blood in vain?
Must women sigh—
Must brave men die—
That tyrant kings may reign?
Ye winds that wait along the sky, hush all your din!
Go, journey round the world—
Awake the earth with plaintive cries, and say:
Say liberty's imperiled,
And freedom's right,
Gaiety's kindly might,
Is only feebly hurled.
The earth is sick with draughts of blood,
The sky is blind with tears, as to be told
And, trampled in the muddy field, of gold!
Lies age and tender years; and while they lie,
While by his fire,
The gray-haired sire
Takes counsel with his fears
Ye stars that circle far above
This lowly home of men,
Petition Him whose name is Love,
To give us peace again:
Lift up your war's cloud,
That dismal shroud,
Chant Mercy's Te Deum.

Zekiel and the Ghost.

BY CLARA AUGUSTA.

I HAVE always had a great and overmastering terror of ghosts! I can remember, when I was but a little child, covering my head up in the bed-clothes, stopping my ears, shutting my mouth, and compressing my senses generally, lest I should see, hear, feel, smell, taste, or otherwise come in contact with a ghost! This unfortunate propensity had been fostered and strengthened by silly stories related by silly old women, who, I have observed, seem to take particular delight in impressing people with the idea that they have been permitted to look beyond the vision of ordinary mortals into the dim and shadowy mystic land. So many of these idle fancies had permeated my shallow brain, that I was afraid to go courting Sunday nights, lest I should encounter on my return, not Cupid, but his delightful posse of winged cherubs, and a ghost—a gaunt, tall, lean, white ghost.

In spite of all this superstitious feeling, I got in love at last with one of the prettiest little maidens in Wheatfield, Delia Harwell, by name; and, after a few beautiful attentions shown to her by my humble self, I began to flatter myself that I, Zekiel Hamilton, was not altogether an indifferent object in the eyes of the fair Delia.

But, somehow, I never could get up courage enough to pop the all-important question? whether because I visited her always in broad daylight, and the sunshine is not so primitive of tender feeling or whether her sweet, innocent, don't-think-of-anything look disarmed me, when I would fain have revealed myself.

Time passed on, until I had been "paying attention" to Delia two whole years. All this time I had never taken her out riding or walking after sundown, on account of the ghosts; but, as I alleged to her, for fear the chilly air might give her an attack of bronchitis.

My father and mother bore my procrastination with commendable patience for a while; but toward the close of the second year of my courtship, my father grew a little unquiet, and told me very plainly, one morning at breakfast, that if I didn't get over my stupid bashfulness and propose to Delia Harwell, he would propose for me.

This would have been the very thing, and nothing would have pleased me better; but, unfortunately, my good mother had a curious notion that a husband has no right to enter into any arrangement without the sanction of his wife, and consequently she vetoed my kind father's magnanimous proposal in toto.

"Let Zekie do his own courting, Sam. If he don't know enough to ask a girl to have him, let him live and die an old maid, I say! If I wanted anybody, I'd ask 'em, and done with it!"

"The same as you did me, Sarah," said my father, meekly.

My mother blushed, and said to me: "Sam Hamilton! it would look full as well for you to hold your tongue! I didn't ask your opinion!"

"I know it," replied my father, submissively; and so the subject dropped.

But the conversation produced a powerful effect on me, and I lay awake all night (with my candle burning to keep off the ghosts) thinking on my abominable situation, and trying to make up my mind to ask that terrible question.

I loved Delia as well as I did my budding mustache—which was saying a great deal—and Delia would be an admirable wife for me. She could make butter and cheese, and most delectable pies, and was not afraid of ghosts! Therefore, I should expect her to fasten the doors of nights, go out of the room after any article which might be wanted in the evening, and sleep on the front side of the bed!

I thought over the magnificent prospect, and was very nearly resolved upon my fate. Just then I heard, in the garret above my chamber, a frightful noise, as if a whole squadron was billeted there, and had determined upon a Saturday night's carouse (I have since decided that it might have been the rats), and in an instant pop went my cranium under the blankets, and pop went Delia Harwell and every thing else, save ghosts, out of my thoughts. I was in a cold sweat—underwent the homeopathic treatment all night, and morning found me little benefited thereby.

However, I went to church—it was Sunday—and saw Delia, blooming and rosy as ever; and all the while that Parson Brown was delivering his three hours' sermon, I was thinking how much better Delia Hamilton would sound than Delia Harwell. It wouldn't make so much difference, after all, though, was my final conclusion, for both names began with the same suggestive letter.

After the service I went over to Mr. Harwell's and Mrs. Harwell would have me to supper; they were going to have green peas and roast lamb (my especial favorites), and it was not in human nature to resist the temptation. True, I said every thing I could think of to get off, but nothing would avail; Delia urged me and declared I was no gentleman if I refused. Now, what could a fellow do?

I resigned myself to my fate; I might as well be killed by a ghost on my way home after dark, as be "no gentleman" to Delia; and thinking I could run across the dark meadow which lay between Mr. Harwell's and home, I stopped, and partook very plentifully of a bountiful supper.

Mem.—I ought not to have done so, for full stomachs are very bad for rapid velocity, when said velocity is to be attained by the use of the heels.

I began to grow dusky while we were at supper, and as soon as we rose from the table, I begged Delia to get my hat and let me go. After a great deal of pleasant and teasing, she brought the article, stipulating at the same time, that if she gave it to me, I must reward her by carrying a package of cloth over to Mrs. Thompson, the milliner, who lived on my way.

I couldn't refuse Delia—of course I couldn't—so I took my hat and the bundle with it, and bidding the family a hasty good-night, I closed the door and shot out of the front gate like a dart.

Arrived at Mrs. Thompson's, I prepared to leave the parcel at the door, that there might be no delay; but unfortunately the good lady was suffering from rheumatism, and could answer my rap only by an emphatic "come in," which I quickly obeyed, and delivered my errand with the door in my hand. But I was not to escape as easily as I imagined; Mrs. Thompson was a voluble woman, and forthwith she proceeded to give me a succinct account of her rheumatism, from its commencement five years before, up to the memorable Sunday night of which I write.

Chancing at the clock, I perceived, to my intense horror, that half an hour had elapsed and I had made no progress toward home. I tore myself away, the last words of the estimable rheumatic following me out into the night.

"Ye see, Zekiel, Dr. Spoonman ordered molasses and hemlock poultice, and I tried it for five mortal weeks, and it didn't—"

The result of Dr. Spoonman's wonderful prescription will be lost to posterity, all through my terrible fear of ghosts.

I ran on and on, puffing like an asthmatic locomotive, until I reached a gloomy piece of road lying through the dark meadow before mentioned. Half dead with terror, I struck into a track which would have done no discredit to a professional racer.

All at once a voice—a singularly sepulchral voice—called out in dreadful tones, so hollow they seemed:

"Stop!"

I was transfixed; for directly in my path stood a tall, white-shrouded figure, with its spectral arms raised high in the murky air. Involuntarily I screamed out:

"Oh, Lordy!"

"Silence, mortal! and listen to me!"

"Don't touch me!" cried I, shrinking back, for the apparition had approached so near that I felt its cold breath on my face.

"Silence, again I tell thee, mortal! as thou valuest thy life, move not the hundredth portion of a barleycorn! I have a message to thee from the regions of infinity! Wilt thou be quiet and listen?"

"Don't kill me! I—"

"Life and death are not in my hands; but I have come to warn thee! Wilt thou promise to perform whatsoever I shall this night require of thee?"

"Yes—yes—any thing, if you won't come near me!" Don't—

"Enough! Now, hearken! Thou hast been to visit a maiden whom thou lovest—a maiden who loveth thee! Why dost thou not marry her?"

"I—I am afraid to—to ask her," I stammered out, falling in my retreat backward, over a hedge-fence, and performing sundry summersets, for the benefit of the ghost, before I could regain my feet.

"Mortal, thou hast promised to do my bidding. I require of thee that thou shalt go to-morrow, at the hour of sunset, and ask this maiden for thy bride. If thou shouldst disobey, then woe betide thee! I have spoken."

The vision vanished; and, thrilled through and through (green peas and all), I sprang into the path, and took the shortest cut for home, where I arrived in an incredibly short space of time, more dead than alive.

That night's adventure decided me. I believed the ghost was a visitation for my sin of procrastination, and I resolved to do its bidding. So, the next morning, after bringing the water for my mother to wash, I dressed myself in my best, and without saying a word to any one of my intentions, I went directly over to Mr. Harwell's. I dared not defer the visit until sunset, as the ghost had commanded me, for fear I might have a second encounter with my phantom friend.

I knocked at Mr. Harwell's front door, and Delia answered the summons. I had never seen her look handsomer. My heart beat like a trip-hammer.

"Ah, good-morning, Zekiel; pleased to see you. Come in."

"Yes, I guess I will for a few moments, if you're alone, Delia!" and I followed her into the pleasant sitting-room. It was a cosy room; and there were roses in a blue pitcher on the mantel, and roses in a tumbler on the table, and roses in a dipper on the window, and roses on Delia's cheeks.

"Sit down, Zekiel; take the rocking-chair, it's softer than the lounge."

"No, Delia; I'd rather sit here on the lounge beside you, if you've no objection," and down I sat, close beside her, in a flutter of fear, hope, anxiety, bliss, and with a queer sensation in my throat. There was a dead silence.

"Delia?"

"What?"

"I want you to marry me!"

"Sir!" Delia's blue eyes opened wide with astonishment.

"Yes; I want you to marry me, and that, too, right quick! The good Lord knows I've been long enough asking you!"

"So you have, Zekiel," murmured Delia, dropping her head upon my shoulder (gracious! how my heart bounced), "and if father and mother are willing, I think just as they do!"

It's nobody's business any thing about the remainder of our conversation; the ice was broken, and before I left Timothy Harwell's one-story yellow house, the wedding-day was fixed—just four weeks from this blessed Monday morning.

Judge of my father's joy, and my mother's astonishment, on learning the state of affairs. Judge of my own happiness when I came to realize that I had really asked Delia to marry me, and that she had consented! Those four weeks were glorious weeks to me, and I kept up a regular mail line between Harwell's and Hamilton's, never thinking of ghosts once, for wasn't I in a few short days to become double? What did I care for ghosts?

The wedding-day arrived. There was a happy time of it; all the aunts and uncles, and cousins in the universe were there; and all united in praising the appearance of me and my bride, and our coats and dresses, and supper, until I didn't know whether I was the bride, or Delia was the bride, or the clergyman.

Mem.—Timothy Harwell had provided a good supply of wine for the occasion.

When we were left alone together that evening, I told Delia the whole story of the ghost, not omitting a single particular.

"Zekiel," says she, "if you'll promise not to be angry, I'll tell you something."

"Angry? of course not, my dearest. Go ahead!"

"Well, Zekiel, I thought you never was coming to the point, and I was tired of waiting, so I fixed up in a sheet, and made believe myself a ghost."

"You the ghost?"

"Yes, I; are you angry?"

"No; but you are the dearest, blessed-est ghost I ever saw in all my life!"

The scene which followed would not probably interest the reader, so I will not write it.

I have no fear of ghosts now; I am in possession of the best ghost in the world, or out of it—and so I am content.

Uncle Abner's Wisdom.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"That's my candid opinion; I don't like her, and all your arguing won't change my mind."

Uncle Abner Benjamin settled his steel-rimmed glasses over his sunken, yet keen blue eyes as he spoke.

"But you are prejudiced, uncle Abner; and what sort of an opinion could you give but a biased one? I tell you you are mistaken; and Lillie Warren is as noble a girl as ever lived."

He was a good-looking champion of the mentioned fair one, was Ross Linley; tall of form, dark of feature, manly in his bearing, and uncle Abner gave a sort of grunt as he looked at his earnest black eyes, all alight in his defense of the pretty girl who had been stealing his heart.

"A pretty how-d'ye-do it is, that a stranger's blue eyes must needs set you clean daff, when there's good, honest, faithful

Amy Evan, that has served you well enough till this fancy miss turns up."

"Amy Evan—why, uncle Abner, what ever put such a notion in your head? When did I ever say I cared for her?"

It was a slightly contemptuous tone he used, although his dark cheeks flushed guiltily as the old gentleman's bright eyes pierced him through and through.

"I hope you never have told her so, Ross, if you intend to fling her aside this way. But if Amy has not translated all your rides and walks and dances into an expression of love, then I have; and I pity her, too. Amy Evan is a noble girl."

"With big hands and frowzy hair," said Ross, incautiously and angrily.

"That's only through your eyes, Ross. A month ago, her hair was ringlets and tendrils; her fingers taper. A change has evidently come over the spirit of your dreams."

A half-angry light was kindling in Ross's eyes, and uncle Abner directly turned aside from the war-path.

"There comes Miss Lillie now, as fair as her namesake. You'd better ask her in, and entertain her."

The old gentleman went out from the cosy sitting-room just as Lillie Warren entered.

She was pretty, with her flushed cheeks and bright eyes, sparkling like diamonds; her short, brown hair, half curly, wind-blown over her white forehead.

She stopped short in the middle of the room, as she suddenly looked up and saw Ross.

"Oh, Mr. Linley, I hadn't the slightest idea you were here! I would like to see Amy, if she's in."

"She is, and I'll call her, although I hope you're not sorry to have seen me as well."

Ross's eyes were far more expressive than his words, and Lillie Warren turned away, her face flushing, while a pretty little laugh rippled from her lips.

"I'm sure I'm always glad to see you, Mr. Linley."

"Then, Lillie, before I call Amy, let me tell you how much I—Oh, here is my uncle Abner; Mr. Benjamin, Miss Warren."

And Ross bit his lips in fierce disappointment as the old gentleman came in, just in time to spoil the declaration of love he intended making.

And Lillie, with her bright eyes full of sedate demureness, as she bowed to the old man, had a second's time to dart a glance of encouragement to him, that set his heart all a-flutter.

Just then Amy entered, and then Ross withdrew.

The yellow harvest moon was just peeping, with its jolly face, over the ivy-grown peaked roof of the old homestead, and by the dormer window, away off in the eastern wing, sat Amy Evan. Her day's work was done; the sponge set, and the kindlings placed in the capacious-mouthed stove in readiness for the morning.

She was a neat, pretty girl, with bright, honest brown eyes, that were full of fleeting lights and shadows; hair of soft, silken brown, arranged in a modest approach to the prevailing mode; a pair of cheeks dusky red, where the sun and wind had kissed them warmly, and a mouth too large for a model of beauty, but sweet and womanly, with small, even white teeth.

Amy Evan was an industrious girl, who could not have existed if compelled to remain idle; and since the day, seven years ago, that she had been a resident of her guardian's house, she had "taken hold" of the housekeeping duties, and worked side by side with Grace, the sable cook.

Amy could leave the kitchen completely behind her when she chose; and to see her in her dainty ruffled *soubise* dress, you'd never have dreamed she spent an entire morning ironing and fluting. Or, in her trailing green silk, that she wore like an empress, and her wee hands encased in such rough number five Alexander's, no one would have believed she was the same young lady who, in neat purple calico wrapper, had that very day made and baked a dozen loaves of bread, and a stone jar of delicious crullers, and then, on hands and knees, flanneled over the immense marble floor of the hall.

But Uncle Abner appreciated her; Grace fairly idolized her; everybody loved her, and so did handsome Ross Linley, until Lillie Warren came, and then—

Ah! it was that thought that was bringing the proud, bitter tears to Amy's eyes, as she sat there watching the golden light that was transmuting all nature by its beautiful process of alchemy.

"He never could have cared for me, or a fairer face would not so soon attract him. But I loved you so, Ross!"

The words came half-sadly from her lips, as she gazed away down the box-bordered path, and saw Ross Linley and uncle Abner coming up to the side-door.

Their voices fell on her ear; she could not avoid hearing.

It was an awful blow; this sudden dethroning of his idol, and he was stunned by it.

He drove up to the villa just as Amy dismounted from her horse, after a ride to the town.

She looked very fair and loveable in her black velvet riding suit, with her jaunty little hat, with its floating white plumes, and somehow Ross felt a wild throb at his heart.

"Miss Evan, let me assist you to the house. Your habit is so long."

She turned a moment in mute surprise at his unwonted attention; then she laughed—and Ross thought how stupid he had been, never to notice how melodious her voice was.

"Miss Evan! Really, Ross, you are demented! When had I the honor of parting company from 'Amy'?"

Her eyes were brilliant, but no gleam of coquetry lurked there, not even a ray of friendship lay in their depths.

"Did I say 'miss'? I'm sure I only meant Amy, dear little Amy!"

She snatched her hand angrily from his. "Don't talk such nonsense to me, I beg. I am not of a sentimental turn."

She walked on, not noting the sad, pained face he wore.

"But, Amy, Amy, do let me speak! I've been so blind, so foolish, so wicked! Oh, Amy, won't you take me back? Please forgive and forget this awful summer, and let me be your lover forever, Amy!"

Coldly, a little surprised, she confronted him as he stood before her flushed, trembling and agitated.

"Why, Ross, what am I to understand from this strange language? Surely Miss Warren can afford you all you desire!"

"Never mention her name to me again, the unprincipled woman, who does not deserve to be spoken of in the same year with you, my noble Amy!"

He was looking at her eagerly, pleadingly, but she did not seem to heed him.

"Ah, then," and her voice was gay and a little tantalizing, "you want me to take the heart Miss Lillie has trifled with? Thanks, no! But I'll tell you one thing, Ross: six weeks ago I would have been the happiest woman living to have known you loved me. To-day, without a pang for the past, or a sigh for the future, I can look you straight in the eyes and say I don't care that for you!"

She snapped her little fingers, and a gleam of half-malicious mischief shone in her eyes as she remembered a September moonlight night.

"There is no hope—no hope for me, Amy?"

His pitiful tenderness touched her.

"Here, Ross, take my hand, and let us be dear friends. But you mustn't love me, Ross, because—because—"

She hesitated, then flushed like a wild rose.

"I see—I see. Another has won your heart—oh! fool that I am!"

He wrung her hand with a grip that left it numb and purple for an hour, and Amy went slowly into the house.

A large easy-chair was drawn up to the open grate, and Amy sat down to warm her chilled hands, her jaunty little hat pushed back over her floating hair, her riding-whip in hand. The door opened, and uncle Abner entered, his grand old face flushed, his bright, piercing eyes glowing angrily.

"Amy, my poor little bird, has that consummate fool been annoying you again? By George, I'll make him sting for this!"

A swift blush had come to Amy's face, but she answered calmly enough.

"Mr. Benjamin, Ross has offered himself to me."

Uncle Abner's eyes expanded like saucers.

"God bless you both—why, Amy, how ever did it all happen?"

He caught her hand and kissed it with chivalrous courtesy.

"I don't know, sir, except that he has become disenchanted with Miss Warren, and that he wants me now."

Amy was not looking at the old gentleman, and did not see the look of pain in his eyes, nor the quiver of his lip, nor how he bit the heavy gray mustache; but his voice seemed a little odd, she thought.

"Well, well, Ross is a lucky boy; I'm glad he's come to his senses. But, Amy, you mustn't leave me after you're married."

"Married!" and the girl's eyes opened.

"Why, Mr. Benjamin, I'm not going to be married."

"You're not? What's the reason? I don't approve of long engagements."

"Nor I! But I'm not engaged. I refused Ross Linley."

Her eyes were turned away again, but uncle Abner saw the pink blushes on her cheeks.

Refused Ross Linley! handsome, intelligent Ross, with a quarter of a million if he's worth a cent! Amy, why did you do that?"

"Because I don't love him."

Her voice was barely audible, and the old gentleman's heart throbbed joyously a moment.

"And why don't you love him? Do you love any one else?"

"Yes, sir."

She buried her face in her hands, all unconscious of the gray agony on the noble face gazing down on her.

"Then take him whom your heart wants, my little Amy. And my benediction and consent go with you."

He sat down by the window, and in the gloom of the room he did not observe that Amy left her seat and came over to his side. The first he knew was a little hand on his shoulder.

"Mr. Benjamin, may I not tell you who my lover is?"

"Tell me whatever you will, darling."

But Amy heard the vainly-hidden anguish in his tones.

"And you'll not be a bit angry?"

Her fingers toyed with his luxuriant gray hair.

"Angry with any thing you could say, little Amy?"

"Then, dear Mr. Benjamin, if you'll let me; it is *you* I love so dearly."

And her proud head went down on the broad breast of uncle Abner.

"Amy, Amy, can it be true? Do you care for me above all others—I, who have worshipped you all these long years? Oh, Amy, my darling, my precious child, I do not deserve this!"

"But I think you do, Mr. Benjamin. At any rate you are the one I love, Ross Linley's attentions notwithstanding."

"And you'll not mind my gray hairs, and my fifty-two years, my birdie?"

"Indeed I shall mind them! I am prouder of them and the noble heart you give me than of any thing else in this wide world."

"Then, darling, let me kiss you while I whisper a praise-offering to God for this great blessing."

And Ross Linley, just outside the window, crept away with a cold agony at his heart that would freeze there for many a long day.

The cool western wind of that sunny-skied October day came strongly in at the window where Mamie West was sitting, lifting the delicate pink lawn skirt from off her slippers, and making her bronze-gold hair blow in a gay flutter.

She made a sweet, homelike picture as she sat there making a shirt for uncle Tunis, and the while singing some merry, joyous melody. Honest-hearted aunt Mary evidently appreciated her, for every little while her knitting would fall unheeded to her lap, and she would gaze and gaze at Mamie. Something seemed to be on her mind, too, judging from the yearning tenderness in her eyes, and the half-nervous manner in which she knitted.

Suddenly she laid down her work and spoke, as if something must be said, and the sooner the better:

"Mamie, how old are you exactly?"

The girl started and then laughed.

"Aunt Mary, how you startled me! Why, I'm twenty next Christmas eve, am I not?"

"Yes, just twenty years old—twenty long years; twenty short years, too."

Mrs. Anderson repeated the words slowly over, as she gazed out on the glowing chrysanthemum bushes. Mamie gazed curiously at her, but made no comment on the rather strange remark, and the old lady continued:

"You don't remember that Christmas night twenty years ago; my sister Annie died then, and you, the motherless baby, were left to me; it has been a long, long time to some people, but a sweet score of years to your old uncle Tunis and I, Mamie. You've brightened the hearthstone ever since you came to us, dear."

Mamie smiled lovingly on the old lady.

"It is you, auntie, and my good uncle who have made me happy since my mother died. Aunt Mary," and her voice grew a little proud, a little angry, a little stern, "where is my father?"

"Then you ought to have seen aunt Mary; how the eyes flashed, and the aged figure was drawn indignantly up; how the lip curled scornfully, and the face denoted the contempt the heart felt."

"Sure enough, where is he? He, the rogue, the villain, who deserted your poor mother before you were born? who broke her heart and killed her by his coldness! But, thank God, he couldn't deny the marriage, for the old minister lives to-day, and I took the certificate from poor Annie's bosom the last thing I did before they buried her."

"He was handsome, was he not?"

Mamie spoke with little emotion; she had no love for her parent.

"As a picture; but we won't talk of past times. I wanted to ask you about Adrian Constantine. Mamie, you love him?"

A glorious light sprang to the girl's rare brown eyes.

"Indeed I do!"

"And he has asked you to marry him?"

"Aunt Mary's voice was cold and hard, and Mamie wondered at it."

"He has. He wants me to go to his city home with him by the holidays. Aunt Mary, may I go? I love him, aunt Mary, and I want to be his wife."

"By Christmas?"

Her head drooped an affirmative, and the old lady saw the sweet blushes come and go.

"Mamie West, look at me a moment. I have something to tell you? Will you listen?"

Something in her tones chilled the young heart before her, and when she raised her wondering face it had lost its girlish blushes, and was full of a vague terror.

"Mamie, remember I only ask you to do this thing; I do not command it; and when you recollect that your uncle Tunis and I have been your benefactors—don't think I am twitting you, my niece Mamie—perhaps you will feel your heart warm toward us in this hour of our need. Mamie, did you know the dear old farm and homestead was mortgaged?"

The girl shook her head with her inquiring eyes firmly fixed on her aunt's face; with the indefinable look of trouble in her face still.

Then she gasped out the one word that had nearly choked the old lady:

"Mortgaged?"



UNCLE ABNER'S WISDOM.

"Yes; for twenty thousand dollars, to a gentleman from New York, who bought the mortgage of old Squire Craven, who lent your uncle Tunis the money to start the mill. But, every thing went wrong, Mamie, since then, and on Christmas day, when you'll be twenty-one, we'll not have the roof over our heads."

The big tears were dropping from under the spectacles, and Mamie felt an uncomfortable lump rising in her throat.

"Can't any thing be done? And, aunt Mary, has this any connection with Mr. Constantine?"

She seemed to think there existed some relation between her lover and the state of affairs.

"That is the point, Mamie. If you will give your lover up and marry this Mr. Fulmore, who holds the mortgage, who has heard of, and seen you, he promises to give it up to us; and I, Mamie, will give you the estate for your sacrifice."

The girl sat staring at the speaker; a white spot gathering on either cheek.

"Give up Adrian!"

"I was afraid you couldn't! There, there, my child, never mind!"

Mamie was sobbing wildly, and Mrs. Anderson was alarmed.

"Aunt Mary," she said, after a moment, "stay here until I return."

Then she went away; in half an hour she came back, calm, pale as a ghost.

"If Mr. Fulmore can prove his honorable character, I will save the home."

And when the old lady kissed her again and again in her thankful joy, Mamie West never smiled or spoke.

"And you will persist in this ridiculous self-sacrifice? Mamie, surely you never could have loved me, or you'd not throw me over so calmly."

Young Adrain Constantine stood in the shady lane, his arms folded, his handsome face pale with wounded love and pride.

Before him, leaning against the trunk of the apple tree, was Mamie, with no love-light beaming in her eyes, no smile on her lips.

She was wan and pale, and Adrain's heart ached as he gazed on her.

"Adrian," she said, and her lips quivered, "you are doing me a great injustice. You know why I give you up; you know how wholly I had given my love to you; and do you think I do not suffer?"

Her appealing eyes were begging for the confirmation of her words.

"Mamie, do you think it is modest for you to marry a man whom you will not see till the wedding-day?"

He spoke vehemently, and then regretted it when he saw the sudden, painful blush rise to her face, as she turned, half insulted, half sadly, away, without a word.

"Don't go—one more word, then I will leave you. Who is this man you are to marry?"

"Richard Fulmore—"

"Heavens!—Mamie—good-by!"

He darted away as if life or death depended on his speed, and then Mamie went back to the old homestead, and sat down and cried.

The days had come and gone, and Christmas was within a sunsetting. In the old homestead the bridal array was in readiness, and as Mamie passed the room where it lay, she wondered how aunt Mary could sing so merrily when she knew the happiness she had forever destroyed.

Sometimes she saw Adrian, too, who had called at the farm-house a number of times. He seemed to feel quite reconciled to a change in the bridegrooms, and Mamie felt grateful that he never referred to the past.

Sometimes she caught herself wondering if it was right, this blind acceptance of a man she never had seen; and then she would read and re-read the letters of commendation uncle Tunis had received. Besides, aunt Mary said it was all right, and she believed, almost religiously, in aunt Mary.

So the wedding-day came, and the minister came, and the lawyer who was to transfer the property to Mamie West's aunt and uncle, just after the ceremony. The old couple, strangely nervous, sat by the window, and Adrain Constantine talked gayly to Mamie, who, unnaturally calm, awaited the carriage that had gone to meet Richard Fulmore.

He was a tall, handsome man, Mamie noted, as, with heart of ice, she watched him spring from the carriage. His hair and eyes were dark, his air stylish, his gait graceful.

They met as strangers meet, and then came a defiant hate in Mamie's heart for this man.

He had been escorted by Adrain to the guest-chamber, to arrange his toilet, and then it was that Mamie, with crimson cheeks and flashing eyes, protested against her marriage.

"Uncle Tunis, aunt Mary, the place must go! I am filled with loathing at the thought of being his wife. A something I never felt before rises up in my soul and smother the kindness I thought to do you, Uncle, aunt, gentlemen, I will go away and leave you; you can tell that man I despise and scorn him."

She turned away, to meet Adrain and the stranger at the door.

Lawyer Green detained her gently.

"Only a moment, I beg, Miss West."

Then he went up to the expectant bridegroom.

"Mr. Fulmore, you will be so kind as to sign these papers before the ceremony. Miss West prefers it."

The gentleman glanced at Mamie; she turned away, without speaking.

"If the lady prefers, most assuredly."

He took the pen, and signed the deed that made "Hillside" Mary West's.

Then old Mr. Anderson stepped forth.

"Sir, you have but given that child her just deserts. By fraud and trickery you wheedled that mortgage from Squire Craven, who was too dull to comprehend your plans; I knew of no way to regain my rights, for I have lost all my money in the mill speculation. Aunt Mary, here, came to the rescue; and, having heard of the many inquiries you made concerning this pretty child, whom you knew as Mamie West, and hearing you declare your admiration for her, we resolved to give you a chance to win her. You know the result of the plan; you listened to the advice of a friend, whom we instructed; you proposed for Mamie West, and to-day you expect to marry her. But first, look well at her, while I tell you her name is Mary Howard—the child of Annie Moore and Richard Howard, alias Richard Fulmore. Do you comprehend the situation?"

It was impossible to describe the consternation that ensued; the facts being proved, the net so skillfully spread, the villain so neatly secured. And need we tell the joy that followed, when, in merry haste, Mamie and Adrain were married, and "Hillside" was restored to its rightful owners?

The Lovers' Parting; OR, SAVED FROM DEATH.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"AND you will wait and be true, Nellie?" said Gaston Noble, as he drew the beautiful girl to his side.

"Oh, Gaston, how can you ask!" was the tearful response, as she raised her face from the shoulder where it had rested.

"Forgive me, darling; there was no doubt in the question, only that I so love to hear you say those sweet words again and again."

"Yes, Gaston, even while I dread this parting—oh, so much more than I can tell, yet will I wait and be true, for beyond the clouds and darkness that have gathered around our lives, I can see the dawning of a better and brighter day," and the face of the lovely girl wore a look of inspiration.

"Until then may God keep you, Nellie," and Gaston Noble gathered the delicate form in his strong arms, and imprinted a pure kiss upon her dewy lips.

"Good-by, my darling—good-by!" and he was gone.

The lovers had come down to speak the parting words at the old trysting-place upon the cliffs that overlooked the Ohio, far up amid the mountains where it first gathers strength and power for the long journey to the sea. Here they had first met; here was told the "old, old story," and it was fit that they should part here, while he turned his face toward the unknown wilderness where Boone and Kenton had gone, to try and win for himself a suitable home, whither, in good time, he might convey his bride.

Gaston Noble was one of "nature's noblemen," in the truest sense of the word. Gentle, true and tender to those he loved, but brave and gallant withal as was ever knight of olden time.

Sweet Nellie Clifford we will not even attempt to describe. Let it suffice that she was all that was lovely in woman, and more than fair to look upon.

The sun dropped behind the wooded slopes in the west as Gaston Noble sprang down the narrow pathway that led to the "landing" some mile or more below.

The "broadhorn" that was to bear him toward the promised land—there was no steamboat then—was to start on its long voyage that evening at sundown, and so he found that he had but a short half-hour in which to reach his destination in time.

With the pressure of these sweet lips still clinging to his own, and the murmur of the low, sad voice yet ringing in his ears, he bounded down the rugged way heedless of all obstacles that lay in his path.

Before his time had expired he was there, only to be told, and how his heart leaped at the words, that the boat would not start until the following morning. Something had detained her captain.

With an aching void in her heart, Nellie Clifford stood and watched the retreating figure of her lover, and long after he had disappeared from sight she continued to gaze upon the spot where she had seen him last.

And thus she stood until the gathering shadows warned her of the approach of night, when, with a weary sigh, she turned her face toward home, that lay across the hill in the valley beyond.

At the foot of the eminence where the lovers had parted, there ran a stream of considerable size, emptying into the river a little way off, which was spanned by the trunk of a large tree that had been felled across it, from bank to bank, to serve the purpose of a bridge, the upper side flattened and thus made easy of passage.

By the time Nellie Clifford reached this

rustic bridge darkness was fast enshrouding the ravine and densely wooded hillside that rose beyond, and with a beating heart she started across, nerved by the thought that once on the other side she would soon be in sight of home.

More than half the passage had been made, when suddenly, from out the thick undergrowth that lined the stream, there came a deep, savage growl that caused the frightened girl to pause in deadly terror.

Absolutely incapable of motion, Nellie stood and stared in the direction from whence the sound had come. Not long did she have to wait an explanation, for a moment later a monstrous black bear, gaunt and starved with his long winter's sleep, burst from the thicket, and, with open mouth, from which protruded a blood-red tongue, dashed out upon the log.

With a piercing scream, that rung sharply over hill and valley, the poor girl, with an involuntary prayer, sprang back upon the pathway that led up the acclivity, and sped away like a frightened deer.

Behind her she heard the heavy thud of the brute's great feet, as they rose and fell upon the rocky way—drawing nearer and still nearer each moment, until she fancied the hot and fetid breath of the monster fanned her cheek.

Oh! for the brave heart and strong arm now, of him who had left her but a brief while before!

Her limbs are failing under the terrible strain; her breath comes in gasps, growing fainter and fainter; the dim twilight of the upper ground fades from her sight; she can go no further, and, with a despairing shriek, she sinks upon the rocks, but, even in the supreme moment of agony, thinking of him.

"Oh, Gaston! Gaston! Where are you now?" and as all things earthly fade away, she hears, as in a dream:

"Here, here, to save you, my Nellie!" and with the leap of a panther Gaston Noble bounds over the prostrate form, and stands between her and death.

He has only his heavy hunting-knife, but what of that, for, even with his naked hands he would have stood as firm.

For an instant only the bear paused, and then, with a savage growl, he dashed forward, and the fight began.

The terrible conflict was short, sharp and decisive.

Braced firmly upon his feet, Gaston met the shock, and as he felt the sharp teeth of the monster in his shoulder, he drove the heavy blade to the handle in the shaggy body; again and again the knife rose and fell, until, faint with loss of blood, that poured from numberless wounds, both the combatants sunk, side by side, upon the rocks.

The brute lay dead with the knife in his heart, but brave Gaston Noble was stretched beside the body, as motionless as his enemy.

And so Nellie Clifford found him, when, with a shuddering sigh, consciousness returned.

Assistance came at length, attracted by the young girl's screams, and Gaston Noble was tenderly borne to the home of his betrothed.

I need hardly say that he was nursed by loving hands, nor need I tell you that nurse was. But, before the autumn came there was a quiet wedding in the village church across the river, and Gaston Noble went not to the "Far West."

The Perils of a Night.

BY CHARLES E. LASALLE.

I.

YOUNG Brandon Havens, full of the zeal of adventure, resolved to seek for excitement in the far Iowa wilds. The year was that, not even now a generation removed, when the "Garden State" was the tramping ground of the untamed savage, and the fierce Delaware and implacable Pawnee made a trip to the headwaters of the tributary streams one of great danger.

But Brandon, allured by stories of the splendid "game" there to be found, joined a party formed in the Illinois settlements to penetrate to the northern Iowa forests, and at the close of a summer day found himself alone in these wilds, having wandered, in his quest of spoils, so far from the party camp as to be, literally, lost. His want of knowledge of the woods, which stretched around him, mile upon mile in all directions, rendered his situation extremely embarrassing and perilous. Though a good hunter, in the sport sense of the word, he was neither a skilled woodman nor a scout, able to read Indian "sign," or to follow a trail. Had he been, he never would have wandered thither alone, his only companion being a noble mastiff, whose devotion to his young master was complete.

All day had he tramped to and fro, hoping to make his way from the dismal labyrinth encompassing him. Game proved to be surprisingly scarce, and, in his eagerness to find the camp before dark, he had not paused in his lonely tramp even to eat. Hence, night found him both weary and hungry; he was dispirited, physically and mentally.

Shade by shade the gloom deepened, until night fairly closed around him; when, almost in despair, he threw himself upon the ground for repose, his faithful dog, "Wolf," at his side.

But, weary as he was, he could not sleep. His mind was so excited over the adven-

tures of the day, and there was such a gnawing sense of hunger, that a disquiet was produced, which effectually drove away all approach of coma.

He lay idly upon his back, his eyes gazing vacantly at the darkness above, and himself listening to the mournful sighing of the night-wind, when he caught the near rustle of leaves, while, at the same time, Wolf uttered a warning whine, and rose to his feet.

Havens came to the sitting posture, and grasped his rifle. By and by, he could hear the stealthy tread of some animal, stealing toward him, and he raised the hammer of his rifle. At the same time he placed his other hand upon the head of Wolf and compelled him to lie down.

By and by, the hunter caught the phosphorescent glitter of the animal's eyes, and thus guided, he raised his gun. There followed a frenzied leap, a fall, a few struggles, and then all was still.

Wolf was furious to rush upon the struggling animal, the instant the gun was fired, but his master restrained him, believing there was no necessity of his dog running any risk of injury, such as he would be pretty apt to receive from a ferocious beast in its death throes.

Finding, however, from the long continued silence, that whatever the nature of the animal might be, it was unquestionably dead, Havens concluded to kindle a fire.

Any quantity of dead leaves and twigs could be found, with little care, and his flint and tinder were in a condition to be used. He was further incited to the kindling of the fire, in the face of all prudence, by the exceeding chill of the night.

Havens supposed the animal to be a panther, and great, therefore, was his surprise when his camp-fire revealed to him a small deer, stretched lifeless upon the ground.

"He must have been frightened by something," reflected our hero, "and was coming to me for assistance. Poor fellow! but isn't that providential, now?"

A sort of reaction of spirits came over him, at this unexpected provision of food—food which was so sorely needed that, after giving his dog a good slice, he proceeded to cook an equally "healthy" extract for his hungry self.

He had a good hot fire kindled, so that this was easily done, and the savor of the burning venison was enough to drive a hungry man wild.

When the cooking was finished, never did poor mortal enjoy a meal better than Havens, and with the return of physical comfort, something like his old exuberance of spirits came back. Such a quietude came over the young hunter, that he felt like sleep; and, assuming an easy position, so that his head rested against the large tree behind him, and his feet were turned toward the camp-fire, he calmly committed himself to the care of heaven, and awaited the approach of sleep.

But, he had scarcely begun to doze, when he became sensible that something unusual was going on around him. Wolf gave several short, sharp barks, and showed such uneasiness that his master cast off his drowsiness and rose to his feet.

From the wrangling, snarling and snapping of teeth, he rightly concluded that a band of wolves had been attracted to the spot by the smell of the meat.

This discovery was a relief, as he cared nothing for these animals, except the annoyance of being kept awake by them. No hunger could impel them to cross the line of fire, with which the hunter can inclose himself; and all that he had to do was to keep his camp-fire brightly blazing.

The wolves appeared to number about a dozen, and, as may be supposed, required but a few minutes to leave nothing but the sliding bones of the deer's carcass.

In fact, this taste of flesh merely served to whet their appetites, and they now turned their eyes longingly upon the hunter and dog, who were so earnestly scrutinizing them.

One of the gaunt, cadaverous beasts, venturing to thrust his long snout too near the fire, was rewarded by a rifle bullet, between his two eyes, which doubled him up in death, with his yelp clipped off as it were with a knife.

This carcass afforded an additional meal to the wolves, but at the end of it, they seemed more ravenous than ever, and approached still nearer the fire.

Havens saw very plainly how he could stand where he was and continue to shoot until the remaining wolves would be so gormandized that no appetite could remain to them, and they would slink away into the woods out of his sight.

But such a proceeding had its disadvantages. In all probability twenty shots would be required to do the work, and the young hunter felt himself unable to spare that amount of ammunition.

And further, Havens had a pretty well-defined suspicion that this pack of wolves was constantly augmenting. It seemed as if their cries, penetrating into the woods, were constantly bringing others around them.

This made it appear very probable that after his original visitors should disappear, there still would remain a large number, so that, with the loss of all his ammunition, there would be no improvement in his condition.

Accordingly, Havens determined to hold his fire until compelled to defend himself.

As he looked out at the wolves, springing and leaping over each other, all angry and hungry, and momentarily growing bolder and bolder, he could see that their number was being augmented constantly, and an uncomfortable suspicion crossed his mind that, after all, the camp-fire might fail to be an effectual barrier between him and them.

Matters began to look serious, and it was with no little misgiving that Havens saw the stock of fuel, hastily gathered with no thought of such a contingency rising, rapidly disappearing in the blazing fire, which his safety compelled him to keep going.

Wolf crouched bristling at the feet of his master, his white teeth gleaming, while he seemed anxious to fly at the audacious brutes, and tear them to shreds. Only his excellent training compelled him to obey the command of his master, and remain still.

The next half hour was sufficient to demonstrate that a state of things was at hand, which was enough to alarm any man. The only recourse for the hunter was to climb the tree immediately behind him; but this again involved the necessity of leaving Wolf behind, to be destroyed instantly by the ferocious beasts whose name he bore.

His master was of too chivalrous a nature to contemplate such a course, with any degree of tolerance, until it should become absolutely certain that nothing remained but a choice between it and certain death.

So he waited, watching, hoping and praying for some other means of escape to present itself.

Havens began to ask himself whether it was not possible to get his dog up in the tree with him. The lower limbs were scarcely a dozen feet over his head, and it seemed that some sort of a rope might be made from strips torn from his own clothes, so as to allow him to draw up the brute after him.

It was a self-imposed labor which by no means promised success. Wolf was very heavy, and it would take a man of more than ordinary strength to lift him through the intervening space.

But our hero believed himself equal to the task, and he decided to make the attempt.

By this time the wolves had become dangerously courageous, and several came so near that the dog sprang a foot or two at them, and they dashed back for an instant in the darkness; but they returned immediately, fiercer and more daring than ever.

One huge fellow was especially savage, and when the side of Havens was turned toward him, made a furious leap, with open jaws at his throat.

Assuredly our hero would have been throttled, and his career would have terminated then, but for the timely interposition of his dog.

While the ravenous animal was midway in the air, and while his jaws were expectantly apart, he was met by Wolf himself, who instantly closed his terrible teeth together in the throat of the brute, and flung him on his back.

There was a fearful struggle for a few moments, but before the hunter could interfere it was over. Wolf never released his hold until the last spark of life was driven out of the treacherous brute, and he lay motionless, with his legs pointing upward, as though he had suddenly been transfixed.

During this fierce fight, the other wolves seemed fairly wild—jumping, leaping and snarling, in dismal disorder, and Havens, to save himself, was compelled to catch up a blazing fagot from the fire, and swinging it before him, to dash directly among the howling wolves, that allowed him almost to touch their bodies before they would retreat.

The last stick of wood was upon the fire, and our hero was certain that the pack, at the very least calculation, had been increased by fully fifty, since their first appearance.

The time had come for the final effort to be made, and he was in the very act of beginning, when he paused, startled anew by a singular occurrence.

The wolves, that up to this time had been creating a perfect pandemonium of tumult, suddenly ceased, and a deathlike silence fell upon them all.

"What does it mean?" was the involuntary question which came to Havens, as he looked toward the animals, that seemed petrified.

This curious hiatus in the frightful discord lasted scarcely a dozen seconds, when there was a sweeping rush as if made by a tornado, and the next moment every wolf had vanished in the woods.

"Is this a miraculous deliverance?" queried Havens, "or is it the coming of a new and greater danger?"

Now and then a faint yelp from the fleeing brutes could be heard, as they sped through the forest, but nothing else reached his ear, although he was too much of a hunter not to comprehend that there was some cause for the singular conduct of the wolves.

In all probability it was the approach of some fierce animal, most likely a panther, an animal which is held in mortal dread by the cowardly *canis* species. If it was really a "painter" (as the western hunters call it) Brandon Havens' peril was increased.

Ensnared in the tree, he could bid defiance to all the wolves in the West, but

there was no such immunity from the panther, whose agility would carry him up among the limbs of any tree in the woods.

The only advantage in the latter case was that the hunter could be tolerably certain of but one foe, so that if he could drive a bullet into his heart or cranium, he would be freed of all danger whatever from wild animals.

So Havens advanced to the firelight and made sure that the priming of his gun was all right, and then, placing his back against the tree, stood on the defensive.

Wolf began to manifest an unusual uneasiness. He whined in his expressive way, trotted around the tree several times, and then sat down, with his nose pointing toward the river.

Which meant that the danger, whatever form it took, was approaching from that direction.

Havens leaned his head forward and strove to penetrate the gloom, and listened; but nothing whatever rewarded his sight or hearing.

Several minutes passing thus, Havens noticed that his dog was gazing upward, as though the particular object which excited his ire was in the tree branches, instead of being on the ground.

Following the direction indicated by the action of Wolf, his master was able to locate the animal which now threatened his life.

The faint light thrown up by the campfire, was barely sufficient to reveal the form of an enormous panther, crouching like a cat upon a large limb and glaring down upon him.

Scarcely a hundred feet separated man and brute, and the former, confident of his aim, concluded to test his marksmanship, certain that he could rid himself of this incubus at once.

Kneeling down by the firelight, he took a long and deliberate aim, sighting for a point directly between the two glaring eyeballs.

All this time, the beast was crouched down, in the attitude of a cat on the point of springing upon its prey, and never moved until Havens pulled the trigger.

Even then the fierce creature stirred not; for to the inexpressible chagrin of the hunter, his rifle flashed in the pan; and, instead of the dying struggles of the animal, he only heard its threatening growl.

Carefully lowering his piece, he poured the powder in the pan, continually glancing upward to make sure that his enemy did not steal upon him unawares.

When he was ready to fire again, Havens concluded not to do so, and he was really glad of the flash in the pan, for at that distance, he plainly saw it was impossible to do more than merely wound him, and that, exasperating a naturally irritable animal, would have precipitated his attack, and insured a bloody encounter, with the probabilities all on the side of the panther's success.

Havens now comprehended what the creature was endeavoring to do. Like all wild animals he naturally had a fear of approaching a man whose eye was fixed upon him, and he was seeking either to get above or behind him.

Finding that he could not steal upon him unawares, the panther now leaped to the ground, and began creeping round in a circle, of which the tree was the center, his whole manner that of a cat as it steals upon the unconscious mouse.

It was an easy matter for the wary hunter to turn with the animal and keep his face toward him, and this he did, holding his gun ready to discharge the instant his enemy should lose patience and attack him.

Wolf was in a quiver of rage, and when he saw his master threatened by this beast, he could hardly be restrained from springing out; but Havens wisely kept him in check.

Brave and powerful as was the mastiff, he had no chance in the world against such a panther, who would have torn him to shreds in the twinkling of an eye.

More than once, the young hunter was on the point of raising his gun and firing. The panther had a curious way of creeping up quite close, and then suddenly retreating and approaching from a different direction, no doubt with the expectation of taking his prey unawares.

Baffled again and again, he as often renewed his stealthy attempt, until the patience of the man became exhausted.

"We may as well settle the matter at once," he reflected, as he brought his piece to his shoulder.

When the panther came up for about the twentieth time, there was a flash, report and yell, and he sprang half a dozen feet in air, with the bullet buried in his neck.

Fearing such a result, Havens began reloading as rapidly as possible, in order to give him the finishing shot.

Furious with pain and rage, and with an instinctive knowledge of who had inflicted it, the wounded brute made directly for the hunter, who, not having time to recharge his piece, ran quickly to the smoldering camp-fire and caught up a brand, which, with one circular swoop over his head, burst into a broad flame and checked the panther, when he was near enough to strike his enemy with his paw.

This act of the savage creature had its effect upon Wolf, who, heedless of the call of his master, dashed like a thunderbolt at their common foe, and the two rolled to the ground in the fierce encounter of death.

Fearful that his faithful dog would be killed, Havens shouted to him again and again; but, if he was heard, the creature was powerless to obey.

Over and over they rolled until they were at his very feet, and it was out of his power to identify them, with such bewildering quickness did they change places.

Then he paused long enough to complete the loading of his weapon, but found, when ready, that he would be as likely to kill one as the other of the combatants, and, therefore, for the present occasion, his gun was useless.

By this time the hunter was in a flurry of terror, lest each second should be the last of Wolf; and, unable to restrain himself longer, he drew his knife, leaped forward and mingled in the fray.

Stepping down, he threw out his left arm and caught at something. Fortunately he grasped the loose, velvety skin of the panther's neck, and holding on with the grip of a giant, he buried his hunting-knife to the hilt in his throat, striking it again and again.

At the same time, the infuriated Wolf was at work with his teeth, and the wounded and overmatched panther speedily began to succumb.

Gradually his clutch upon the dog relaxed, and with a slight jerk, Havens pulled him away, and as he loosened his hold, he saw that it was limp and lifeless.

The moment Wolf was free, his master made an examination of his wounds. His body was covered with blood, and he had been grievously hurt; but none of his wounds were mortal. They had done little more than tear the skin and lacerate the outer flesh; but they were necessarily painful.

"Poor fellow," said Havens, as he stooped down and patted his head. "You are a good, brave dog."

Wolf whined, and crept closer to his master's feet, as if to say:

"All this I did for you, and I am willing to lay down my life for you."

Near by was a small running stream, to which the hunter led his dog and there bathed and dressed his wounds as well as was possible at the time.

This done, he returned to his camp-fire, which had now almost expired.

Havens had suffered so much from the wild beasts of the night, that he determined to keep the fire going until daylight.

A short time was sufficient for him to gather all the fuel that was necessary, and almost immediately he had a cheerful, crackling blaze that threw its light far out in every direction, bringing out the phantom-like tree-trunks and branches from the gloom with vivid distinctness.

No thought of sleep remained with Brandon Havens, and he prepared himself to watch until morning by the side of his suffering dog.

But it seemed that this night was to be a futile one to our hero; for he had scarcely taken his seat, when a suspicious rustling of the branches overhead caught his ear, and he sprang out nearer the fire and looked up.

"What sort of an animal am I to encounter this time?" he mentally asked.

The question was soon to be answered, for at that moment, he discerned a dark body cautiously making its way downward, as though in great fear of losing its hold and falling to the ground.

By and by it came in sight; and when, a moment later, the object dropped to the earth, Brandon Havens believed, for a moment, that the veritable Old Nick himself stood before him.

Cruiser Crusoe: OR, LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST.

NUMBER THIRTY-THREE.

This is one of the many stories which my father had told me of a practice which I held in peculiar horror, and which, indeed, preyed upon my mind whenever I thought of savages. I may as well add here that, ever since I had been on the island, I had contracted a very peculiar habit of spending my leisure hours. When I was indisposed to work, and did not wish to smoke, I would fold my arms, and after thinking awhile, begin a story aloud.

Hundreds and hundreds of the hours which I spent on that island were beguiled by this practice. I would get so interested in my narratives that I would gladly have preserved some of them, which, without flattery to myself, I decide to have been exceedingly engrossing and entrancing; at all events, they were so to me.

But as yet I had not made me pens, ink and paper, but how I remedied this in the end, and wrote this very manuscript, will be seen in its proper place. Another very great amusement with me was to read out the adventures of the skeleton, whose manuscript I had so miraculously found, and which, to me, was the most delightful book in the world.

But these digressions take me from my regular narrative, and prevent me from carrying on the story of my preparations in the eventuality of a siege. This idea held such fast possession of my mind that it had scarcely room for any other, and I was eternally contriving and thinking how

to evade being entrapped by them. My deep desire to be again in company with my fellow-creatures was as great as ever; but to be alone forever was better than to fall into the hands of men who made a practice of devouring human flesh.

A few days after the completion of my fortress, which now assumed a most formidable aspect in my eyes, I again resolved on an excursion. During the whole of this period, my horse and zebra had remained hopped without coming, however, a very good "range, but coming home, at night to lie near my cave, to have some corn and salt from a bowl I placed within their reach.

I took the pains on this occasion to keep my dogs in a leash, so that they might not startle the birds [which it was my firm belief I was about to catch, though how was not as yet exactly defined in my own mind. I was determined, however, that I would do so, not only for use, but for amusement.

It was my belief that it was in and on the skirts of the woods which were near my bower on the lake that I should most easily discover what I was in search of, so in this direction I took my way early in the morning, mounted on my horse, and with Tiger—to his great disgust, kept within bounds by a rope—trotting by my side. With a view to listen for the forest sounds, by which chiefly I could hope to track my hoped-for prey, I moved very slowly.

My accoutrements consisted of a gun, a net similar to that with which I had captured my gazelles, my sword-saw, knife, and a bundle of twine, a small supply of provisions, and a gourd for water.

This equipped, I advanced quietly and cautiously; but for a long time nothing occurred to disturb my meditations, when suddenly they were interrupted by an adventure of rather a startling character. For some time no trace had been seen of any large wild beasts, which was the more surprising that my domestic animals appeared to promise them an easy prey. One thing, however, struck me forcibly, and this was the fact of the abundance of all kind of game on my island, which, for a very long time, puzzled me inconceivably.

How natural and easy of explanation the circumstance was will be seen in a future part of my narrative.

It was toward evening; I was looking out for a fit station for my camp, when I noticed that my dog was uneasy, while my horse all but stood still. Looking upward, I saw several vultures in the air. Curiosity in some sort overcoming prudence, I tied my horse and dog to a tree, and, clutching my rifle, crept on to where the scene of action seemed to be.

I advanced with all the due caution of an experienced hunter, and soon reached the summit of a small eminence, along which ran a wall of thorny bushes. Stooping to see if I could pass, the whole was explained at a single glance. It was a huge lion enjoying his dinner.

The mighty master of the forest had killed a young zebra, which he was tearing to pieces in a most unseemly manner. He was stretched out at his ease, enjoying his prey, which seemed greatly to his taste, and also to the taste of a host of other animals, of a less lordly character. Attracted by the scent, they had come rushing to the *curee*. These were hyenas and jackals, which, having stealthily approached, stood with fierce and envious eyes, watching the rapid motion of the jaws, which portended but a scanty remnant for themselves.

In addition to these already sufficiently repulsive animals, there were slate-colored vultures, which had come whirling from the clouds, and which now, with folded wings, stretching out their bare necks and uttering the most piercing cries, jumped, in a most ridiculous manner, toward the object of their greedy desire, something like some hungry men-servants watching the performance of their masters on a scanty allowance.

As long as the whole of this parasitical gang kept at a respectful distance, the master of the feast allowed them to growl, scream, whine, chatter, and make every angry manifestation at their pleasure; but presently the ravenous circle drawing nearer, the front ranks being pushed forward by the weight of the rear ranks, the whole movement became at first annoying, and then alarming.

Of this the lion, hitherto so contemptuous in his manner, seemed perfectly aware, for becoming strangely incensed, he cast a sidelong look at his parasites, and then, when least they expected it, leaped, with one bound and one terrible growl, in to the midst, striking to the right and left with what might be called his mighty fist. The scene was terrible, and ludicrous at the same time. Away sped the jackals; the hyenas, heavier and less agile, followed suit, while the hideous vultures made their retreat slowly. Then the lion, as if satisfied with this moral chastisement of his uproarious court, returned leisurely to his feast.

Infinitely amused at what to me was as good as a play, I remained motionless. Then, reflecting on the danger of the vicinity of this beast, I took a steady aim, and being now a first-rate marksman, hit the animal in the head, when he rolled over in convulsions, and soon after died.

For some time there was stillness; and then, slowly, cautiously, and with uncer-

tain steps, the whole gang returned to the charge. They evidently thought the lion asleep, for they halted now and then to watch him. No motion. Nearer and nearer, until, with a howl and a yell, they darted on their prey, when such a scene of confusion, fighting and contention ensued, as never was surpassed.

I returned to my quarters, lit two fires to keep off the prowlers, and then lay me down to rest.

I was awakened in the morning by certain peculiar and singular sounds, which, while I was collecting my scattered senses, filled me with astonishment. The sun had just risen, and all nature seemed suddenly to have awakened to life. Close to me I could hear the crowing of cocks, the screaming of cockatoos, the chattering of the common parrot, and the howling of the jackal, in delightful concert.

Unable to make out what it was, I crawled out, gun in hand, to elucidate the mystery. Fortunately, my dog was tied up, so that he could not startle the game. The noises appeared to proceed from a small, thickly-wooded ravine or gully, which extended from my camp to the hill-lock whence I had watched the lion. I crawled slowly along, and suddenly halted.

The sounds were close to me; in fact, in a little open glade, covered with high grass. All the sounds I have alluded to were again repeated, but one at a time. Having a shrewd guess now what it all meant, I watched, and presently I saw a slight movement in the bushes, at no great distance from my hiding-place—say about twenty feet—followed by a scratching and picking noise in the high grass.

Then I saw, or thought I saw, some long feathers protrude now and then above it; and, carried away by an impetuosity which was certainly very foolish in my circumstances, fired in the direction of the moving object; when, to my annoyance and mortification, up rose a magnificent cock bird, his tail erect, and walked off into the bush.

A loud laugh startled me, and made me jump to my feet, when, on the bough of a tree, I saw a bird closely resembling what is commonly called the laughing-jackass, literally grinning at my misfortune. I strode away, humiliated, annoyed, and angry with myself. Though the eggs of this bird were of little use, yet I knew the young pullets to be very good eating.

After a little reflection, I determined to make an effort to capture this very audacious bird, with all his cunning, as well as the female, which was sure to be about. After considerable reflection, I thought of a plan. From its being damp, and knowing the habits of the bird, it was pretty certain that the cock would return to his feeding-place.

Cutting two straight, long staves, I fastened them one on each side of my net, with another cross one, to keep them apart. Then, carrying this machine to the little open glade, I fixed it in an upright position in the soil, having first fastened a cord to the upper part. No sooner had I done this than I made a precipitate retreat, for I had discovered the reason why the cock selected that feeding-place. It was a perfect nest of leeches, upon which this bird feeds habitually.

Not being sure as to the time at which he might return, I had brought with me food and drink, so as to be able to watch any amount of time, taking care to select such a spot of ground as was likely to be free from leeches.

This very peculiar bird, which is very plentiful in the islands lately discovered by Captain Cook, is called a pheasant, or lyre bird (*menara superba*), but is, properly speaking, a thrush. It is about the size of a small fowl, of a dirty-brown color, approaching to black in some parts, while its beauty consists in the magnificent tail of the cock-bird, which is in shape exactly like a lyre.

But what is this sound? Again I hear its strange imitative voice. It seldom cares about its own natural note, but rejoices in imitating all the sounds of the forest. I gently raised my head, and there it was again, strutting round in a circle, scratching up the dead leaves and soft mold with its somewhat formidable claws, and then feeding on the leech, in which food it delights. Quick as thought I pulled my string, and then darted into the open glade, to find, to my inexpressible delight, that both cock and hen were my prisoners.

This was no bad beginning, and now that my trap was provided, it was not many days ere I had a goodly supply of birds, with which I returned to my residence highly delighted. Their wings were clipped, and this precaution taken, they were let loose in my fowl-yard, where, with some care, they thrived, and often supplied me with young birds and eggs. The nest of the lyre bird was about three feet in circumference, and a foot deep, having an orifice on one side. The female was a very unattractive bird, having a poor tail, nothing like the male. It lays one egg, of a slate color, with black spots.

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MINDING THE BABY.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

Little baby come to console
While its mamma goes down street;
Tum along and make no fussie,
No little darlin' half so sweet.

There, don't cry now, looney, wooney!
By O baby booney, wooney!
Ten little toes and two little feet!

Trot, trot, trot, whip up the pony,
Lots o' little fun to take a ride;
Quit your squalling, papa bring honey;
There, don't open your mouf so wide.

Dot the 'tombach ache, looney, wooney!
Dat's too bad now, booney, wooney!
A little pologic had befoe be tried.

Let go my hair there, none of your pranks now!
Stop that yelling, I want none of that!
Dry up in a minute! Take these spans, now,
You've something to cry for, you little brat!

Kicking all your clothes off, you little busy;
Never saw a young 'un so fidgity and fussy;
And I'll make you commit suicide in two minutes
By the watch, you understand that.

The Creole Renegade.

BY JOSEPH E. BAIGER, JR.

"Look out! Hyar they come, boys. Once more git them blazes!" almost howled the tall, lank guide, as he added another red-man to the score of those he had already sent to their last account.

An irregular, flame-tinged smoke ran around the half-circle formed by the *corraled* wagons, and the dusky-painted savages recoiled, as they had done before, from the stubbornly defended fort, dragging off with them the dead and dying braves; and then once more all was quiet, save the wailing of some affrighted infant, or the groan of the dying, with not an Indian to be seen.

Within the barricade an anxious group were gathered together, apart from the other defenders, engaged in an earnest consultation. Among them was the guide, already referred to, who was listened to as a kind of oracle by his companions.

"Wal, boss, it stands jest this away," he was saying. "We've did well, so fur, but they've got us k'ralled, an' unless we git help—which ain't very likely to chaine along hyar, c'ase you're off'n the main trail a good bit—why it's only a matter o' time, fer they'll git in sooner or later, now mark my words. They've got three, or mebbe four, to one, an' though we wipe out a dozen or so, what good is it, on'y to make the end still harder?"

"But what can we do?" dependently asked the man, addressed as "boss."

"I on'y see one chance, an' thet's a mighty slim one," thoughtfully replied the guide. "You member the train we passed yesterday? the emigrant one? Wal, ef so be we c'd jest git a messenger to them, they're strong a-plenty to lend us a hand, an' I believe they w'd. But now the question is, who's to make the tempt? He must be a brave feller, who has good eyes, plenty o' kerridge, an' who kin swim like a duck. Ef no one else 'll venture, I'll go."

"No, Dick, that would never do!" exclaimed Mr. Calhoun, the captain of the wagon-train. "Without your experience, we should not be able to hold out an hour."

"If the rest are willing to trust me, I will make the attempt," promptly added a young man, modestly, stepping forward.

A shade of pain spread over the face of the leader at this, for Buenos Ayres, the young volunteer, was like an adopted son to his heart, and the affianced lover of the gentle Clara Calhoun. But he did not speak; only glanced anxiously at the guide.

"I knowed it, younker, I knowed it! an' you're jest the feller I'd a' picked out, on'y I wanted it to be volunteer-like; fer, as I tell ye, it'll be hand in hand w' death."

"But no worse than to stay here, and I may succeed. If you've any advice to give, let's have it, for the sooner I make the attempt the better for all."

"You know the most. Jest make tall tracks fer the big trail, ef so be you git o'ar, an' hurry back w' a when o' fellers, double-quick. Mebbe you'll be in time, mebbe not."

The plan was simple, but none the less dangerous. Ayres was to enter the river, and by diving, aided by the high bank, thus attempt to pass the enemy, who probably were upon the keen look-out along this only avenue of escape. Shielded by the wagons, and under cover of a heavy fire, the young man slid down the bank and entered the water, with the fireballs of his comrades still warm in his ears and their grasp upon his hand. He did not bid adieu to Clara, lest it should unman him, now when every nerve was needed.

The next few minutes were fraught with painful suspense to the watchers, for they expected each moment to hear the wild yells of triumph, telling of their scout's capture or death, and the frustration of their last hope. But no such signal came, and an hour passed slowly by, before they allowed themselves to hope.

Two desperate assaults were made that afternoon; and although the first one had been repulsed with fearful slaughter, it had also weakened the little force of the besiegers, so that they trembled anew when the second was made. There was a wild recklessness in these attacks that puzzled even Dick Maxwell, the guide, veteran as he was. It seemed as if they were fighting for more than plunder; as though some master-spirit was urging them on for some deep-set motive—and such, although they did not know it, was the case in reality.

Time and again the savages were hurled back, but each time they returned with renewed ferocity and determination. But the emigrants were fighting for all that was dear upon earth to them, and it seemed as though they must be successful, when a series of wild, triumphant yells, in their rear, astounded them. The enemy had entered the corral by the river side; and now it became one horrible *melee*.

One by one the defenders fell, and but for the intervention of one man, not one would have been left alive. But he, who appeared to wield great power and influence, finally quelled the bloodshed; not, however, until two-thirds of the men were massacred, together with a number of women and children. Yet one could hardly believe that this was the result of pity upon his part, for the blood of the slain still deeply dyed his hands.

He came and stood before the bound form of Mr. Calhoun, who gave a start and half-stifled curse as he appeared to recognize the man. In stature rather slightly built, but of

a muscular, active development, dressed in a faded suit of gray. His age would be difficult to surmise, for his smooth, beardless face gave no clue. His dark complexion, hair, eyes and a slight accent, all spoke of French-creole blood, with perchance a taint of the African; so, at least, his enemies had affirmed.

He had joined the wagon-train some weeks previously, but had been summarily expelled by Calhoun, for offensive remarks toward Clara. Until now he had not been seen or heard of, but the deadly glitter in his treacherous eye, told how deeply bitter would be his revenge now, and then turned away to where the women were secured. His eye flashed as he noted that Clara was rudely bound to a wagon, and harshly ordered one of the guards to unbind her.

"Believe me, lady," with a mocking bow, "I deeply regret this rather unceremonious mode of renewing our pleasant acquaintance, but your father was so stern, and my adoration so intense, that I could no longer resist the temptation."

Clara did not answer, but turned away with a shudder of loathing, and catching sight of her father, rushed forward and clasped him in her arms. With an oath the renegade tore her loose, and forbade any intercourse.

The captives passed a wearisome, agonizing night, for the red demons had discovered a quantity of liquor in the wagons, and would travel no further; then began a hideous scene of debauchery. All night long Pierre Lajoie, the creole renegade, with two savages, whom he could trust, kept guard over the captives; for well they knew that if blood was once spilled, the drunken fiends would pause at nothing. But the night passed finally, and then preparations were made for taking up the route, after some difficulty in sobering the "noble red-men."

The wagons after being emptied were set on fire; the plunder-packed upon the captured stock, while the prisoners, with one exception, were driven along on foot. Clara Calhoun was seated upon her own noble horse, that had been reserved for that purpose. In pure devilry Lajoie had caused her to don her finest riding-habit, complete even to the gloves, and then proceed along beside him.

The marauders appeared to little fear pursuit—who was there to do so?—and proceeded very leisurely along, leaving a broad and distinct trail, in high glee at their victory.



THE CREOLE RENEGADE.

tory, despite the heavy loss they had sustained. Considerably before noon they halted beside a cool spring that bubbled from beneath a huge rocky ridge, and began preparations for the noonday meal.

Among others, an old negress who had acted as cook for Clara and her father, was released and ordered to cook the dinner. Now, Aunt Sally had a will of her own, and a good share of native cunning, and had always felt a keen spite against "dat yaller nigger," as she termed Pierre, even to his face. She had not let her wits be idle, and had, during the day's journey, consulted with Calhoun, and the two had evidently come to some understanding.

Aunt Sally bustled about with her usual alacrity, and after setting the meat to cook, conveyed a pan of water to her young mistress, conscious all the time that Lajoie was keenly eyeing every movement. Kneeling down with back toward him, she began lavishing Clara's hands, at the same time speaking in a rapid whisper:

"Bress you, honey, chile, de ol' marse say you mus' git away from heah, jest's soon's ebber you kin. Don't move, but is'en. He say fo' you to keep wight back on de tracks ontel you meet young marse; an' dere tell 'im to hurry up, 'c'ase dar's no knowin' w'at dem cussed funnely red niggers is gwine ter do. 'Sh! don't spoke. Dis is de way."

"Dar's your hoss all ready, an' I'll jest took your dinner an' his—dat dratted yaller-skin, out dar, an' den w'en dey's all a-eatin' you mus' jump up and trable, as marse says. You nebber mind dat feller; I'll tend to him. W'en I holler, jest you click it. I'll see dat he don't 'fere, an' oncet round dat corner, dey can't shoot, an' your hoss is de bestermost ub de lot, anyhow. Will you do it—for marse's sake?"

A quick glance told that Clara understood the somewhat incoherent direction, and was prepared to do her part; the more especially as during the day, Lajoie had become more impudent and familiar, and she dreaded what another night might bring forth. She watched—Aunt Sally, who, as she paused beside the renegade, humbly spoke:

"Please, marse, mist'ess says won't you let her 'n' her pa eat out dar, 'way from dose red gempiums?"

"A good idea, Snowflake," laughed he, "but I can improve upon it. I will dine with her instead. So make haste."

Delighted at the complete success of her little ruse, Sally speedily prepared a tempting lunch, at a spot near where stood the loose horse, feeding upon the short, sweet

grass, and then announced it as ready. Clara disguised as well as possible, her repugnance, and suffered the renegade to press the food upon her, and ate quite heartily, for she felt the need of some nourishment.

The fat old negress bustled around, bringing cold water or passing the food, and then as she noted the savages busily employed, she turned to the horse, and under pretense of loosening the bridle so that he could eat more freely, placed him in a better position for mounting. Then, passing behind Lajoie, she made the signal for Clara to start, at the same time precipitating her full weight upon the traitor's shoulders, bearing him like an infant to the ground.

Clara, with one bound, reached the horse, and another placed her in the ready saddle, and then sprung away. Lajoie, almost strangled, managed to utter a hoarse cry that brought the savages to their feet, grasping their ready weapons, as if in anticipation of an immediate attack. Half mad with fury, Lajoie tore Sally's arms from his neck and arose, but she still clung to him with all her pertinacity. Then raising his arm, Pierre dashed his clenched fist full in her face with fearful force, felling her senseless to the ground.

By this time Clara had passed the point, and was galloping at full speed along the back trail. The Indians appeared dumbfounded, and stood like statues, while the creole dashed madly after the fugitive, on foot, rendered frantic with rage, lest his prey should yet escape his clutches. But, his senses quickly returned to him as Clara vanished from sight, and in another minute, all but a half-dozen left as a guard, were after the fair fugitive.

Clara kept to the broad trail and pressed forward at full speed for nearly an hour, during which she had traversed fully half the distance from the scene of the massacre. Suddenly, in rounding a spur of the foothills, she found herself almost upon a strong body of horsemen. One glance showed her they were whites; then a horseman spurred forward, and she was clasped in the arms of her lover.

Her story was quickly told, and an ambush speedily formed, as the enemy could not be far in the rear. Scarcely had this been done, when the Indians appeared in view, using no precaution whatever; and the first intimation Lajoie and his companions had of danger was a deadly, withering volley poured into their midst, that almost

annihilated them. Then, with loud, ringing cheers the blue-coats dashed forward, scattering the warriors like chaff in every direction.

Knowing the urgent need of haste—for did one of the enemy reach the camp before them, the captives would inevitably be massacred—the rescuers dashed forward at top speed. But, as they neared the spot, a crowd of persons rushed to meet them, cheering and waving hats, caps, any thing that would testify joy. And they were whites—the captives!

Then ensued explanations. It seemed that, during the confusion of Clara's escape, one of those acting as cooks had contrived to liberate several of the men, who in turn assisted their companions; and then, fired with rage and fury, as they thought of the merciless massacre, threw themselves upon the guard and by mere force of numbers slew them.

Buenos Ayres then spoke. He had followed the trail indicated, and by good fortune overtook the train, finding it to be a government one, guarded by a company of cavalry. Implying assistance, he had not been refused, and following at full speed, arrived opportunely, as we have seen.

There is but little more to add. Pierre Lajoie was found to have been killed at the ambushade. The emigrants joined the wagon-train after burying their dead. In due course of time Mr. Calhoun, Clara, and Ayres reached San Francisco, where they intended to reside; and the young lady soon after changed her name for that of her brave lover.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Here Walker's 'Gander-Pullin'.

"Yes, boys, a man's whole life kin be made miserable, ef its course changed, by a very small circumstance, at least mine was, though, to tell the truth, the circumstance wasn't so small as I thought 'a' been."

The speaker was my old friend, Herc Walker, and he was addressing a group of his comrades as they lay around under the shade of a large live oak that grew in the inclosure attached to my ranch on the St. Marcus.

"Why, Herc, your life don't seem to be very miserable," said Ned Hardin, a sprightly young fellow, who was learning the "ranger business," as he called it.

"No, Ned, not miser'ble; but it war changed prehaps from what it might 'a' been. But I'll tell you all about it, my boy, so that you can take warnin', and never let a purty gal set your head a-turnin' till you can't tell a white man from an Injun."

"I don't know whether you fellows all know it or not, but up in old Kaintuck—God bless her!—in my time, shoolin' matches an' gander-pullin' were just considered the tippest-kind uv sport, an' nigh onto every Saturday thar war one o' t'other uv the two somewhar in the neighborhood. The settlements war mighty thin, I mean few an' far between, then days, an' so the boys had, some uv 'em, had to come long distances to reach the ground whar the fun was goin' on."

"The Injuns warn't as bad as they war in the times when Boone an' Wetzcl an' Kenton warmed their jackets fur 'em, but still thar was enough uv 'em round occasionally to knock over a settler an' scalp him to-boot. Well, I war as gay a young buck then as ever you see, an' when I got inside uv my buckskins, an' took my rifle only my shoulder, I jest thought that ev'ry gal in the whole settlement war bound to fall head over ears in love at fust sight."

"I've seen a when uv fellers, in my day, thet war jess as big a fool as I war, an' I shouldn't wonder if thar warn't some uv 'em not more'n a hundred miles from whar we're settin' now."

And the old fellow gravely nodded his head toward his young friend, Ned Hardin, who was something of a dandy.

"Well, to proceed, as the book writers say. Next neighbor to the old man—my old man—lived Squire Wilcox, something like ten or twelve miles distant, an' the squire had a powerful nice gal, Mary Elizer war her name, and on her I had sot my young affections, an' I tell you now, boys, fur I ain't ashamed to own it, I loved that Mary Elizer harder'n a mule can kick."

"I reckon she know'd the state uv my feelings, fur, woman like, the munit I begun to make up to her, she begun to play fast an' loose till I really didn't know whether the gal cared any thing fur me or not."

"But I warn't long findin' how the land lay. Word come round one day that thar war to be a big gander-pullin' over at the squire's the following Saturday, an' you may depend that I got things into nice trim to show off afore Mary Elizer, an' mebbe, if I got a good chance, to pop the question an' settle the matter fur good an' all."

the Green river chap, an' while I war thinkin' an' cussin' the luck, that war all against me, one uv the boys come up an' says:

"Here, I'm afraid that the new feller's a-goin' a leetle too fast fur you. I see 'em," says he, "walkin' off arm an' arm down to'ard the big spring awhile ago."

"That was enough fur me, an' I determined to go in search uv the gal, an' ask her plump out whether I war to be made a fool of any longer. You see, I war so mad I war a fool in earnest."

"Off I put, an' had got perhaps half-way to the spring, when all uv a sudden I heard a scream, an' the next munit I see Mary Elizer rush out uv the timber an' a big Injun right after her, with another one behind him."

"The whole thing war done so quick that I almost took my breath, and when I saw the other feller, war thar two young chaps about my own age in sight, when I see them runnin' to'ard the house, yellin' Injuns like mad, but leavin' the gal in the lurch, I felt my dander gittin' up, an' I really b'lieve that I would 'a' pitched into the whole nation."

"All this while Mary Elizer war pullin' out fur dear life, an' the two Injuns after her, one uv 'em, the foremost one, with his tommyhawk raised to strike."

"I jess had time to think what a blessin' it war that I had seen the feller docterin' my rifle, an' how lucky it war that a good, sound bullet went down onto the foremost one, then I throwed her up to my face, an' holdin' 'suar' on the imp, I let her go."

"Thar war a center shot, an' the Injun fell like a log rolled over, kicked out one leg, an' then lay still."

"When the foremost Injun fell t'other one stopped short an' began pullin' off a lot uv horse-hair, turkey-feathers and the like, while as fur Mary Elizer she made my hair stand on end by screecin': 'Oh! he's killed! he's killed!' and then rushin' up to whar I stood, topped off by calling me a murderer and the like tender little names."

"Well, you can believe that thar war a to-do, fur, you see, the whole thing war got up as a good joke on me. They wanted some fun—an' they got more'n they bargined fur."

"The Green river chap got it into his head to play Injun an' show 'em how easy it war to make a feller like me show the white feather, which in them days was jess the worst thing a man could do, an' in that way spile all my chances with Mary Elizer."

"One o' 'em draw'd the bullet out uv my gun, while he an' another one went down by the spring an' lay dead."

"Well, lads, the end of the joke was a sad one, an' thar war them as said I knew all about the trick, an' killed the feller through jealousy, but them as knowed me stuck up fur me, an' so the matter died out."

"But, Mary Elizer war done fur as far as I war concerned. I heard afterward as how she had married a Yankee feller because he had a pack full of lookin'-glasses and blue beads."

"Next year I left the country an' went over to Indiana, an' from thar I wandered out here, but I never can forget how Mary Elizer did take on 'bout her Green river chap."

Beat Time's Notes.

WIGGLETAILS are small and neat animals that live in all well-regulated wine-barrels. It is said when they get tired of being wig-gletails, they turn into musketoes with a great deal of facility, so you see it is far better to use your rain-barrels for vinegar or cider, or to keep your money in, rather than for rain-water.

THE Toad has about the homeliest physiognomy of all reptiles—he is a regular *grace* and comeliness are not the chief points of attraction in it. What the chief points are, you will do without several meals if you wait there till I tell you. Loving mothers call their babies toads, and young wives are also called toads by soft, loving husbands, but this, I think, is the very worst kind of toadyism. Their tread is not very stately, nor is it likely to suggest Camilla's o'er the unbent corn. What they live on I don't know, any how, but I can tell what some of my friends who don't work half as much as a keg of vinegar live on.

THE Tobacco-worm is the only worm besides man that hankers after tobacco, but he prefers his tobacco in the raw, and is the only person I know of who ever got fat on it. Its color is an invisible green, and it may be said he sticks fast to the weed.

THE Behemoth, if still living, is the largest animal of the moth persuasion. But I am not acquainted with that gentleman's habits—whether convivial or otherwise—nor do I know what bill of fare he prefers, what paper he takes, or what are his politics.

THE Rhinoceros I have several times beheld in spirited pictures in all well-developed First Readers. He is represented with a hide which is composed of three thick, necks of sole-leather. He dearly loves his horn, which is on his nose, and therefore his nose is well calculated to interfere with other people's business. Who his grandmother was I am unable to say. The one in this country belongs to the Van Amburgh species, understands Greek and Latin, and was never known to crack a smile or a head.

THE Whale is a fish which has grown clear out of recollection, and I may add also out of its boots. It is very fond of water, and never mixes its drinks. Sailors beguile him with the harp-oon of a thousand yards of string, and then bottle him up in barrels. His bones are also their bread. The whale is a great blubber, and is always blowing; and from this sprung the boyish pastime of "blowing blubbers." A whale roasted whole would cover the nearest to taking an alderman's appetite of any thing I know of. If I was fishing in a small creek, and one should take my hook, and the line wouldn't break, and I should pull him out, and he should be three hundred and forty feet long, I should be very much surprised—I should indeed. Jonah swallowed a whale once, if you will swallow the story.

THE Owl is a feathered songster that is out pretty late at nights, and his mellifluous carol makes it pretty lively for late lovers returning by lonely roads. As a bird he is not a success. His eyes look like a pair of over-fed goggles, and are only fit to sleep with in the daytime. He has a ministerial debilitation for little chickens, and always labors under the mistake that the hen-roost is his roost. For further particulars, inquire of the owl.